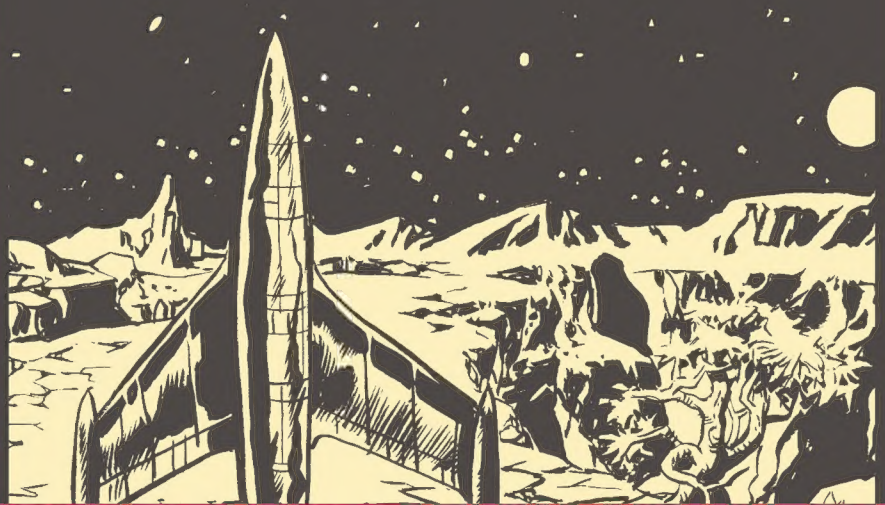
SPAWN AND OTHER STORIES of MARS

ILLUSTRATED BY *Wallace Wood*



SPAWN of MARS

AND OTHER STORIES

TITLES IN THIS SERIES

Corpse On The Imjin And Other Stories *(Harvey Kurtzman)*
Came The Dawn And Other Stories *(Wallace Wood)*
50 Girls 50 And Other Stories *(Al Williamson)*
'Tain't The Meat ... It's The Humanity And Other Stories *(Jack Davis)*
Fall Guy For Murder And Other Stories *(Johnny Craig)*
Child Of Tomorrow And Other Stories *(Al Feldstein)*
Sucker Bait And Other Stories *(Graham Ingels)*
Zero Hour And Other Stories *(Jack Kamen)*
Judgment Day And Other Stories *(Joe Orlando)*
Bomb Run And Other Stories *(John Severin)*
Aces High *(George Evans)*
Spawn Of Mars And Other Stories *(Wallace Wood)*

COMING SOON

Grave Business And Other Stories *(Graham Ingels)*

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"Deadlock!" in *Weird Fantasy* #17, January-February 1951
"Sinking of the Titanic!" in *Weird Science* #6, March-April 1951
"Rescued!" in *Weird Fantasy* #6, March-April 1951
"The Aliens!" in *Weird Science* #7, May-June 1951
"Breakdown!" in *Weird Fantasy* #7, May-June 1951
"The Probers" in *Weird Science* #8, July-August 1951
"The Enemies of the Colony" in *Weird Fantasy* #8, July-August 1951
"The Gray Cloud of Death!" in *Weird Science* #9, September-October 1951
"The Invaders" in *Weird Science* #9, September-October 1951
"Spawn of Mars" in *Weird Fantasy* #9, September-October 1951
"The Maidens Cried" in *Weird Science* #10, November-December 1951
"Transformation Completed" in *Weird Science* #10, November-December 1951
"The Secret of Saturn's Ring!" in *Weird Fantasy* #10, November-December 1951
"The Mutants!" in *Weird Fantasy* #10, November-December 1951
"The Conquerors of the Moon!" in *Weird Science* #11, January-February 1952
"The Two-Century Journey!" in *Weird Fantasy* #11, January-February 1952
"The 10th at Noon" in *Weird Fantasy* #11, January-February 1952
"A Gobl Is a Knog's Best Friend" in *Weird Science* #12, March-April 1952
"The Android!" in *Weird Science* #12, March-April 1952
"Project ... Survival!" in *Weird Fantasy* #12, March-April 1952
"The Die Is Cast!" in *Weird Fantasy* #12, March-April 1952
"Gee, Dad ... It's a Daisy!" in *Shock SuspenStories* #2, April-May 1952
"Dream of Doom" in *Weird Science* #12, May-June 1950
"Only Time Will Tell" in *Weird Fantasy* #13, May-June 1950
"The Meteor Monster" in *Weird Science* #13, July-August 1950
"The Black Arts" in *Weird Fantasy* #14, July-August 1950
"Machine From Nowhere" in *Weird Science* #14, September-October 1950

SPAWN of MARS AND OTHER STORIES

ILLUSTRATED BY *Wallace Wood*

written by Al Feldstein, Harry Harrison, and Wallace Wood

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EDITOR'S NOTE

EC Comics did not publish writer credits and its master records no longer exist. Based on the best information available, we believe the creator credits above to be accurate. We welcome any corrections.

CRYPT
WEIRD
FANTASY

BILL MASON

SPAWN OF WOOD

Wallace Wood and EC science fiction were practically synonymous during the heyday of *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy*. Wood was a master at creating believable rocket ship interiors with intricate dials, displays, switches, gauges, and wiring. His spacesuits looked they would actually work — but they were also stylish and sexy. His sleek, shiny spaceships pulsed with the power to propel his readers to the stars. His starscapes and planetary vistas were beautiful and breathtaking. And his alien creatures were at once credible, unknowable, and yet, somehow, relatable.

Wood's first few science fiction stories for EC were done in collaboration with his partner, Harry Harrison (about whom more later). But his first EC science fiction job on his own, "Dark Side of the Moon" (p. 1), was truly a solo effort, as he not only penciled and inked it, but scripted it as well. Wood's artwork here is chunky and caricatural. The wisecracking skeptics who greet Edgar Walden on page 1 give way to a *Destination Moon*–style rocket journey, then to an Avon Comics–style futuristic city inhabited by little green men, then to the men in white coats who take Walden away just before ... the end.

In "A Trip to a Star!" (p. 7, written by Gaines and Feldstein) we become more aware of Wood's simplified composition, striking design, and dramatic black shadows than we are of the story itself. The two youthful astronauts resemble the 23-year-old Wood and the 18-year-old Al Williamson (who had not yet become a regular EC artist). Feldstein kept his captions short and few, and Wood applied his shading by hand — no Craftint or Zip-A-Tone here. The rocket ship interiors feel spacious and silent. Wood has not yet entered his "beautiful clutter" period, and everything still has room to breathe.

(The majority of the other stories in this volume were jointly plotted by EC publisher William M. Gaines and editor Al Feldstein and then scripted by Feldstein. Exceptions are noted.)

"Return" (p. 14) is drawn in a robust, full-bodied style. By this point there is nothing that Wood's draftsmanship can't make exciting and

memorable. Grace notes like the giant roses and pet alien critter on page 5 are there to embellish the nuts-and-bolts storytelling that takes us through mind-bending stretches of space and time. In wordy patches — like the elaborate explanation of a "space warp" at the end of "A Trip to a Star!" and the copious data about what is needed to maintain life on a starship in "Return" — Gaines was doing what he was best at: dreaming up cosmologies and histories with enough technical detail to give them substance. In Feldstein and Wood he found the right creative spirits to clothe his visions in words and images.

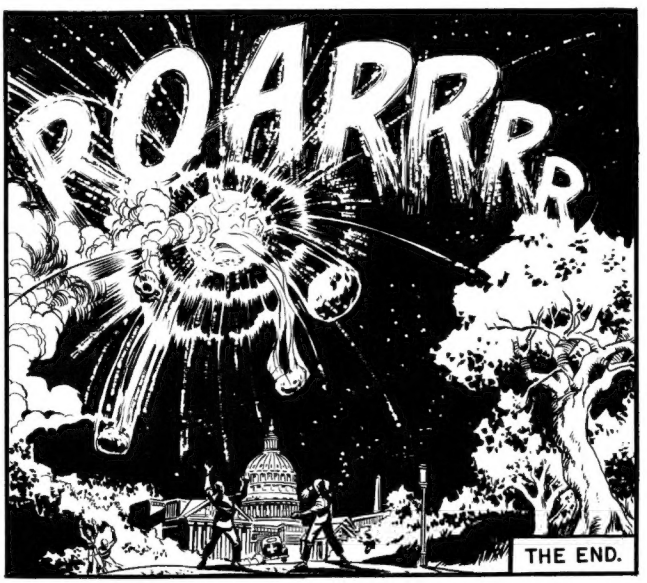
"Deadlock!" (p. 21, plotted and probably scripted by Wood) is based on "First Contact," the 1945 Murray Leinster novella that introduced the universal translator to science fiction and was just the kind of story to appeal to Bill Gaines. There are plenty of moody, noirish close-ups of the Earthmen, while the aliens are not-quite-cute and not-quite-horrible. The mutual-destruction ending approaches genuine tragedy, especially when one of the aliens replies, "Yes! It is too bad!" to his terrestrial interlocutor.

At the 1972 EC Fan Addicts Convention in New York City, Gaines remembered "Sinking of the Titanic!" (p. 27) with pleasure, naming it as one of his favorite time travel stories. George Seymore, the "dark stranger" of the *Titanic* disaster, travels back to 1912 to avert the catastrophe and ends up causing it. Two years after "Sinking of the Titanic!," Gaines and Feldstein produced the more elaborate "...For Us the Living" (not in this volume), about a man who travels into the past and causes Lincoln's assassination.

"Rescued!" (p. 33, plotted by Wood, probably scripted by Feldstein) begins with a smiling self-portrait of the young Wood at the head of a party emerging from an Earth rocket. Wood expertly visualizes and brings to life the themes of putrescence, monstrous transformation, and "friendly fire" death. Feldstein reprised it two years later in the John Severin and Will Elder classic "Counter-Clockwise" (not in this volume).

"The Aliens!" (p. 40, script by Gaines and Feldstein) is realistic and clever. We can almost hear Gaines chuckling to himself as he reads the story from the original art, noticing here a pose borrowed from Will Eisner, there a progression of panels inspired by Harvey Kurtzman. The Arab looking at the night sky as he stands outside his tribal chief's tent recalls the Romantic optimism of Leigh Hunt's "Abou Ben Adhem," that once-popular poem in praise of loving one's fellow man.

"Breakdown!" (p. 47, script by Gaines and Feldstein) is a beautifully drawn and expertly told hypnotic-screen story written at about the same time as "Scared to Death" (*Came The Dawn And Other Stories*, Fantagraphics Books, 2012), an offbeat horror story drawn by Wood that combines social satire with hysteria and terror. The FBI fat cats in the opening scene of "Breakdown!" harken back to the Defense Department brass at the end of "'Things' from Outer Space!" (*Child Of Tomorrow And Other Stories*, Fantagraphics Books, 2012) while the sinister stranger and the demented family dog come from Harrison and Wood's "The Meteor Monster" (p. 191). For once, we're allowed to see what the aliens look like when they drop their hypnotic screens, although we're warned that the depiction is inaccurate ("...as we feel it is preferable to preserve the sanity both of the artist and of you, our readers!").



"The Probers" (p. 54, script by Gaines and Feldstein) is an anti-vivisection preachie with a spectacularly beautiful splash page: Wood makes his rocket interiors look like plates from Piranesi's *Imaginary Prisons*, with catwalks, bulkheads, and instrument panels shown from several angles simultaneously. The gaunt-faced captain, the stocky "bio-guy," and the boyish geologist are unexpected types, each portrayed with a scrutineer's eye for nuances of character. In the culminating scene, Drake and Scott's facial expressions change as they realize what their captivity means and what their fate will be.

"The Enemies of the Colony" (p. 61), another Wood-scripted story, plays on the ambiguity of the mokos, who are terrifying in their cuteness, and the hydra-files, who look noble and even loveable in their saurine otherness. Note Wood's adroit use of Craftint to indicate multiple planes of depth in the hunting scene on page 6.

"The Gray Cloud of Death!" (p. 69) is memorable for the rubber-seal edging around the airlock being eaten away — a terrifying detail to me when I was 10 — and the three spacemen standing on the outside of the Venus-1, waiting for death. Page 7, panel 1 ("I plunged the lit match into the gray cloud and it flared up in a sheet of flame...") is the only moment in the story when we feel that the youthful astronaut stands a chance against the Gray Cloud.

"The Invaders" (p. 77) is an extreme example of the ultra-detailed and humorless "epic" style that Wood and Feldstein used in stories like "The Conquerors of the Moon!" (p. 119) and "The Two-Century Journey!" (p. 127). Six pages of beautiful figure drawing, spectacular hardware and landscapes, and good-looking people — and nobody so much as cracks a smile! Wood had never drawn better or more intensely, and yet there is something missing. What was needed? More individuation and fallibility in the characters, perhaps.

"Spawn of Mars" (p. 83), the title story in this collection, is an interplanetary romance with a beautiful heroine whose husband turns out not to be what he seems. No other EC story is so candid on the subject of sexual attraction and marital love. After the tender and intimate conversation on page 7, it is left for the reader

to work out the meaning of the nurse's remark in the last panel.

"The Maidens Cried" (p. 91) continues the sexual frankness of "Spawn of Mars" with a race of moth-like creatures whose females are irresistibly attractive — but also fatal — to male visitors from Earth. Most 1951 EC readers were boys entering or about to enter puberty. Nothing could have seemed more grown-up and worldly to them than a preview of the chapter on reproduction — in all its glorious variety! — in a mid-20th-century high school biology textbook.

Nothing, that is, but the case of Christine Jorgensen (1926–1989), recipient of the first widely reported sex reassignment surgery in a series of medical procedures that lasted from September 1951 to December 1952. ("EX-GI BECOMES BLONDE BEAUTY," proclaimed the front-page headline on the New York *Daily News*.) "Transformation Completed" (p. 99) came out more than a year before the Jorgensen announcement, probably in September 1951. George Jorgensen (as he was known then) was living in Copenhagen and undergoing hormone replacement therapy. The last panel of "Transformation Completed" shows Dr. Emil Hinde standing glumly in the church where his daughter, now a man, and her boyfriend, now a woman, are getting married. A year later, Gaines, Feldstein, and Wood dealt with the liability of sexual identity once again in "There'll Be Some Changes Made!" (not in this volume), a science fiction fantasy about a planet of sex-changing humanoid snails.

In "The Secret of Saturn's Ring!" (p. 105) Wood's art becomes fussier and more detailed, Feldstein's captions get longer and wordier, and the narrative thrust of the story slows to a crawl. Were comics ever meant to get as strenuous as this? Bill Gaines seems to have thought so, since he includes more information about how spores are formed and destroyed and what it feels like to navigate through "billions of moonlets" than most readers are likely to sit still for. The dramatic high point comes on page 5, when the commander is eaten alive by a mass of living goo, drawn as only Wood could draw it.

"The Mutants!" (p. 113) has an unimpeachable moral, but it is also strident and over-explicit, like a *Shock SuspenStories* preachie that misses its target. Once the mutants have been sent into outer space to find a planet of their own, they look physically more appealing to us (their rearranged facial features notwithstanding) than the bigots preaching hatred and intolerance back on Earth.

"The Conquerors of the Moon!" (p. 119) begins with a private showing of a newsreel documenting the Uranium-Development Corporation's unsuccessful attempts to develop the Moon as its private property. Chairman of the Board R.M. Lamont advocates teleporting part of Earth's atmosphere to the Moon as the solution to UD's problems, but his plan fails with catastrophic results. The scenes of people on Earth gasping for breath and lunar colonists being attacked by spores that have burst through their outer casings are the dramatic high points in this loosely plotted story. Lamont might have been an emblematic figure of the greed and irresponsibility of big business in a social novel by Theodore Dreiser or Jack London, but Gaines and Feldstein are unable to work up much interest in him, and he remains a grim-faced non-entity.

"The Two-Century Journey!" (p. 127), another story clogged by too much exposition, benefits from the intensity of Wood's art, which gives us a sense of the texture of daily life aboard the two-mile-high starship. The father saying goodbye to his family before he goes through the airlock and the gnomish president of "New Mistico" greeting the starship at the end of its journey are surprising and unexpected bit parts.

"The 10th at Noon" (p. 135) shows Wood at his gnarliest and most caricatural. The look of surprise and outrage on the face of the man in the splash panel is almost comical, while the reporters rushing to their telephones and the newsmen in the UN Press Room are a foretaste of Wood's lampooning of 1952 American life in "Blobs!" for the first issue of *Mad*. The two scientists with their "future-injection" machine are seriously intended, but they tread a fine line between farce and horror.

"A Gobl is a Knog's Best Friend" (p. 141) has a hyper-detailed splash page, and something is uncannily familiar about the alien monster extending an appendage toward the astronaut

and his dog — until it hits the reader that the alien is about to pet the astronaut. As the story progresses, Captain Dexter starts to resemble Humphrey Bogart in an unsympathetic role, while Donaldson and his dog seem increasingly at home. The alien palace festooned with sculpted eyeballs is a characteristic Woodian touch.

"The Android!" (p. 149) is loosely based on Ray Bradbury's "Marionettes, Incorporated" stories, two of which were adapted by Al Feldstein and illustrated by Jack Kamen (*Zero Hour And Other Stories*, Fantagraphics Books, 2014). Wood and Feldstein have put aside the overwrought style of their science fiction epics and switched to a hip, modernistic look that foreshadows the satires of suburban life in the early magazine issues of *Mad*. Protagonist Ron Martin slumps to the floor on page 6, no longer able to tell the androids from the human beings.

"Project ... Survival!" (p. 155) pulls out all the stops for a final story on the scale of "The Two-Century Journey!" A memorable splash page shows two men standing on a vast metal scaffold where a rocket ship is nearing completion. This time the story is exciting and involving from the start, and Wood's visual flourishes — from the explosion of an "electron bomb" to a sea of molten lava to a Craftint version of Noah's flood — have real point and meaning. Doctor Jansen, with his short beard and Scandinavian features, looks convincingly patriarchal, but his parting words to the passengers of the A.R.C.-1 seem out of character, more a tacked-on note of Biblical portentousness than something Jansen might have thought or said in real life.

"The Die Is Cast!" (p. 163) is an amusing trifle, more a sign of Gaines's delight in his own cleverness than a serious story. Wood handles

"The Die Is Cast!" with his usual scrupulousness and precision, although he probably had a twinkle in his eye when he got to the craps-shooting BEM in the last panel. The astronaut whose life was saved because one of the holes in the giant domino left space for his head is a nice touch.

"Gee, Dad ... It's a Daisy!" (p. 169) is a poetic-justice story that pits the grinning bully Stanley against the flower-loving Arnold, foreshadowing its climax when Stanley strips a Shasta daisy of its petals in an act of gratuitous cruelty. The ending is heralded by an allusion to Birnam Wood coming to Dunsinane. Few readers would be likely to get this bit of Shakespearean lore today, but it was still common cultural property 60-plus years ago.

Wood was always a protean artist, moving unpredictably from virtuosity to that and back again. I leave him here just before I first discovered him in the summer of 1952. "What will this amazing artist do next?" I thought as I read one great science fiction story after another and sampled the first few issues of *Mad*. It was all a combination of the familiar and the unexpected, and I had no idea how long it was going to last.

"This is where we came in," as my father never failed to say when he took me to the movies.

WOOD AND HARRISON

During the days of their partnership at EC, Harry Harrison (1925–2013) and Wallace Wood (1927–1981) had not yet decided what kind of stories they wanted to tell, what kind of artists they wanted to be, or — perhaps most importantly — how the penciling, inking, and writing chores should be divided.

In fact, they left their ambitious first EC science fiction collaboration, "Dream of Doom" (p. 177), unsigned. The spectacular splash panel depicts cartoonist "Art Bristol" balancing himself in front of letters of fire against a black background. (Like virtually all comics artists, they drew their stories on Bristol art board.) The script is almost certainly by Harrison.

The scene shifts to the waiting room of "Dr. Froyd," then to Art shaving in front of his sexy wife, then to the offices of "Gill Baines," Art's publisher — who enthusiastically praises Art's work — then to the freelance art studio where Art and his partner, Bill Kurtz, have a dramatic confrontation. The story ends with a phantasmagorical car crash, a reprise of the opening scene, and a final panel that reads like the sign-off of a radio play.

Wood's art is energetic and confident: he clearly had fun imagining Art Bristol's life as a suburban commuter and theatergoer, and in caricaturing EC publisher William M. Gaines and editors/artists Al Feldstein and Johnny Craig in the publisher's office scene. ("Windsor" and "Newton" are also inside jokes that refer to the Winsor & Newton brushes that artists use to ink their work.) The insider's view of Art's spacious studio — with its swipe files of current comics and illustration, works-in-progress tacked up on the walls, and its bohemian

atmosphere — must have looked tantalizing to the readers of *Weird Science* in 1950.

Art's nightmarish fall from a window after he hits his partner with a T-square was possibly inspired by an incident (described by Frank Jacobs in *The MAD World of William M. Gaines*, Lyle Stuart, 1972) in which All-American Comics editor Sheldon Mayer hit the teenaged Gaines with a T-square and gave him a nosebleed. The last two pages of "Dream of Doom" become increasingly fragmentary and dreamlike. A priest apparently gives Art the last rites — and we tailspin into the circular ending/beginning.

"Only Time Will Tell" (p. 184, probably written by Gaines and Feldstein, art by Harrison and Wood) is a time warp story. (Harrison once said that it was penciled by Jules Feiffer (b. 1929), but when Feiffer looked at it while this volume was in production, he declared, "I had nothing to do with it.") Harrison and Wood produced a snazzy-looking splash page with multiple images of Steve Dorner trapped in an hourglass. But they had a hard time making Steve age convincingly and in visualizing the "mysterious black hole in space" that starts him on his travels through time. The line from *Macbeth* in the final panel reads like an ironic comment on Steve's predicament: far from being "master of his time," he has been defeated and crushed by it.

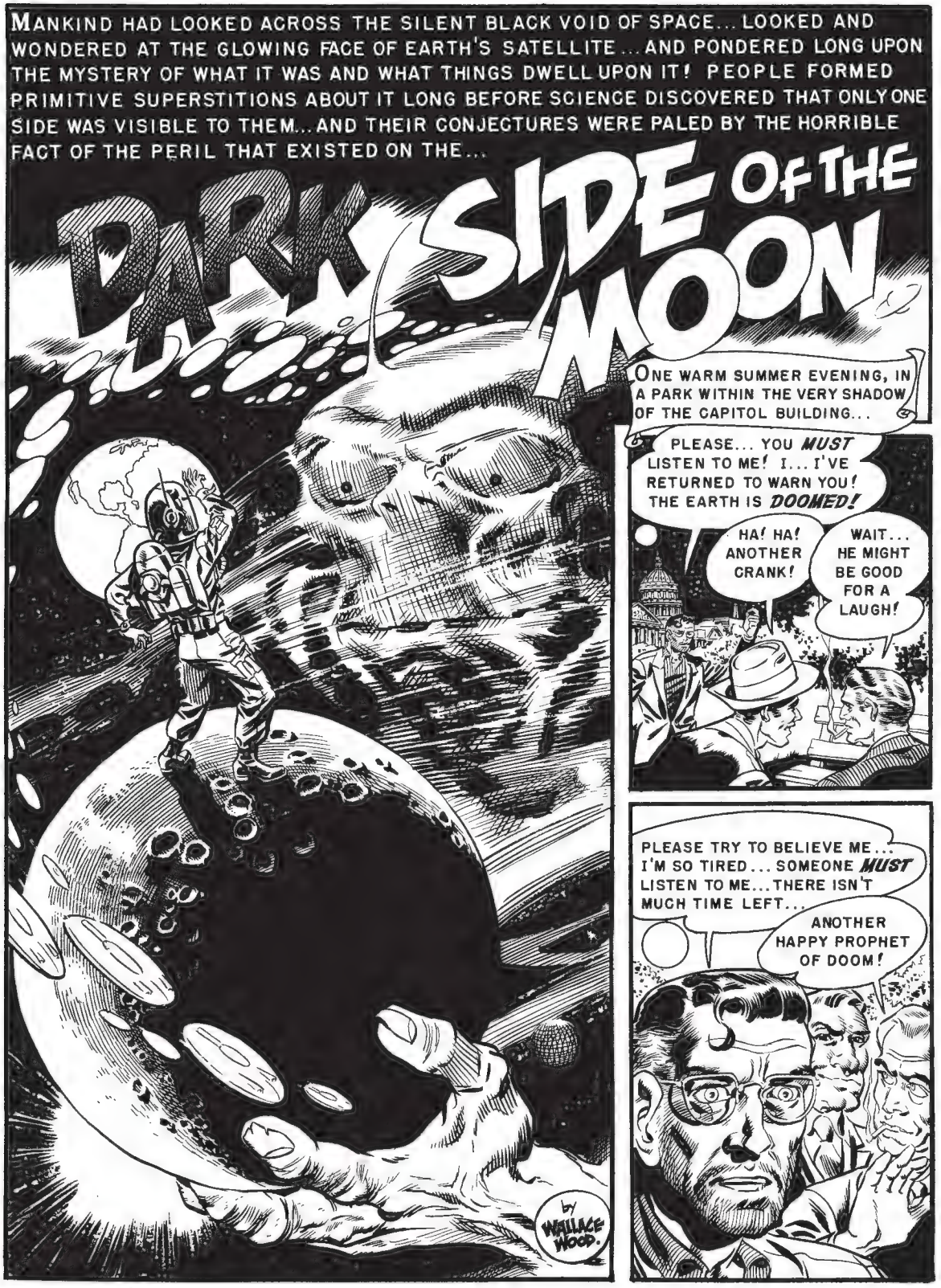
"The Meteor Monster" (p. 191, probably written by Harrison; art credited to "Harrison and Wood" in *Tales of Terror!*, Fantagraphics Books and Gemstone Publishing, 2000) is more like a Gaines/Feldstein story. The nasty little meteor monster looks like an uncute version of one of the mokos in "The Enemies of the Colony" (p. 61) and the creepy last panel recalls the "peachpits-in-the-garbage" ending of "Seeds of Jupiter!" (*Child Of Tomorrow And Other Stories*, Fantagraphics Books, 2013). The Eisnerian reaction shots of the townspeople on pages 4 and 5 have just the right *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* glumness.

In contrast to the baroque extravagance of "Dream of Doom," "The Black Arts" (p. 198, art credited to "Wood and Harrison" in *Tales of Terror!*, script almost certainly by Harrison) is drawn in a simple, open, almost childlike style. When bookworm Luther Martin stumbles upon a copy of H.P. Lovecraft's *Necronomicon* in "the old part" of the public library, he sets out to win the love of Marion Dennis, the beautiful but distant librarian (a "Marion the librarian" years before Meredith Willson and Franklin Lacey's 1957 Broadway hit, *The Music Man*). His attempts come to nothing until he puts one of Lovecraft's spells to work and waits for the result. Marion's transformation into a femme fatale on page 7 is effectively played off against Luther's nervous dithering. The combination of tranquility and horror in the last two panels is pure Harry Harrison.

"Machine From Nowhere" (p. 205, probably written and certainly drawn by Harrison) is Harrison's penultimate EC story. Harrison's art looks unsexy and effortful without Wood's backup, but its upbeat message — "Somewhere ... up there among the stars ... is the future home of man" — parallels Professor Dreeben's musings at the end of "Lost in the Microcosm" (not in this volume). The tiny helicopter-like machine that leads Dave to an "atomic research lab" and brings back a piece of uranium is borrowed from the 1941 story "Mechanical Mice" by Maurice A. Hugi (pseudonym of the British science fiction writer Eric Frank Russell (1905–1978), who introduced the self-repairing robot to science fiction). In the last panel, Dave and Professor Donaldson contemplate the night sky through a picture window in a non-theistic epiphanic moment.

Harrison and Wood split up, and Harrison became a prolific science fiction author, gaining his greatest fame for his series of novels starring The Stainless Steel Rat and for the novel *Make Room! Make Room!*, which became the basis for the 1973 movie *Soylent Green*. Harrison was inducted into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame in 2004. The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America named him a Grand Master in 2009.

BILL MASON *teaches in the humanities department at Dawson College, Montreal, Canada. He has been writing about comics since 1954, when he had a letter published in* Weird Science-Fantasy *#27.*


MANKIND HAD LOOKED ACROSS THE SILENT BLACK VOID OF SPACE... LOOKED AND WONDERED AT THE GLOWING FACE OF EARTH'S SATELLITE... AND PONDERED LONG UPON THE MYSTERY OF WHAT IT WAS AND WHAT THINGS DWELL UPON IT! PEOPLE FORMED PRIMITIVE SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT IT LONG BEFORE SCIENCE DISCOVERED THAT ONLY ONE SIDE WAS VISIBLE TO THEM... AND THEIR CONJECTURES WERE PALED BY THE HORRIBLE FACT OF THE PERIL THAT EXISTED ON THE...
DARK SIDE OF THE MOON
by WALLACE WOOD.
ONE WARM SUMMER EVENING, IN A PARK WITHIN THE VERY SHADOW OF THE CAPITOL BUILDING...
PLEASE... YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME! I... I'VE RETURNED TO WARN YOU! THE EARTH IS DOOMED!
HA! HA! ANOTHER CRANK!
WAIT... HE MIGHT BE GOOD FOR A LAUGH!
PLEASE TRY TO BELIEVE ME... I'M SO TIRED... SOMEONE MUST LISTEN TO ME... THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME LEFT...
ANOTHER HAPPY PROPHET OF DOOM!

I AM EDGAR WALDEN, FORMERLY OF THE U.S. ROCKET RESEARCH FOUNDATION... THE SOLE SURVIOR OF THE ILL-FATED SHIP "COLUMBIA"! HOW WELL I REMEMBER THAT COLD MORNING AT LOS LLAMOS TESTING GROUND... THE FEW SCATTERED VEHICLES DWARFED BY THE GIANT ROCKET...
"...AND THE FACES... THEY WILL ALWAYS BE WITH ME! JOSEPH KRAMER, AMERICA'S FOREMOST ASTRO-NAVIGATOR..."
THIRTY SECONDS! SAFETY BELTS SECURE!
"...ADAM BLACK ROCKET ENGINEER, AND EX-NAVY TEST PILOT..."
TWENTY SECONDS! KISS OL' MOTHER EARTH GOOD-BYE!
"...AND THE OTHERS... MIKE PARENDEAU, METEOROLOGIST... HARVEY TOVAR, RESEARCH ASTROPHYSICIST... AND WILL LEYDEN, ROCKET EXPERT..."
THIS IS IT, WILL! TEN SECONDS!
CORRECTION! FIVE SECONDS! ..NOW!
"THEN THE SHOCK... A GREAT, SILENT JOLT THAT DEAFENED US WITHOUT SOUND... FOR IN A SPLIT SECOND, WE WERE MOVING TOO FAST FOR SOUND WAVES TO CATCH US! I'M AFRAID MY NOSE BLED QUITE PROFUSELY."
"BY THE TIME WE HAD OUR WITS ABOUT US, THE EARTH WAS MERELY A REFLECTED HEMISPHERE THAT WE STUDIED THROUGH THE ELECTRONIC PERISCOPE..."
"IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED... DAYS RECORDED ONLY BY THE CHRONOMETER, FOR THERE WAS NO LIGHT NOR DARKNESS... WE GREW ACCUSTOMED TO THE SHIP..."
I'M A PLAIN OL' COUNTRY BOY!
I STILL CAN'T GET USED TO ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY, WILL! I KNOW IT'S CENTRIFUGAL FORCE, BUT...
OF COURSE! YOU REALIZE WE'RE IN A CAPSULE WITHIN THE SHIP WHICH IS ROTATING AT GREAT SPEED SO WE MAY STAND IN NORMAL POSTURE, BUT IT IS OUR DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS THAT DISTURBS YOU, EH?
WALDEN! MIKE! COME HERE! IT IS SO CLOSE I COULD REACH OUT AND TOUCH IT!
OH, WHAT A SIGHT! I WISH WE COULD KNOCK A PORT-HOLE IN THIS TUB SO WE COULD SEE THE REAL THING!
2.

TODAY WE MAKE OUR LANDING! JUST THINK... WE WILL BE THE FIRST MEN ON THE MOON!
WE'VE SEEN MARS, MERCURY AND VENUS... BUT NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO SEE ...THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON!
"AND IT WAS TRUE! FOR IN CIRCLING THE MOON FOR OUR LANDING, WE SPED OVER ITS HIDDEN FACE..."
FRANKLY, EDGAR, I'M A BIT DISAPPOINTED! I DON'T KNOW WHAT I EXPECTED...
YEAH... I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL! IT'S LIKE FLIPPING A COIN AND FINDING BOTH SIDES ARE HEADS!
"THEN WE WERE TOO BUSY FOR FURTHER CONTEMPLATION OF THE STRANGE TERRAIN BELOW! WE'D LOST ENOUGH MOMENTUM AND WERE ABOUT TO LAND..."
FIRE THE FORWARD ROCKETS!
HANG ON, BOYS! IT'S GOING TO BE ROUGH!
"THOUGH, COMPARATIVELY, WE HAD SLOWED TO ALMOST A STANDSTILL, THE AGONY OF OUR TAKE OFF WAS AS NOTHING TO THE SHOCK OF LANDING..."
RUMBLE
CRUNCH!
WILLY, WE'VE DECIDED YOU MUST HAVE THE HONOR OF BEING THE FIRST MAN TO SET FOOT ON THE MOON!
NO... I CAN'T! IT'S TOO GREAT AN HONOR... I CANNOT...
NONSENSE! WE'D NOT BE HERE BUT FOR YOUR EFFORTS, WILL!
"AT FIRST IT WAS GREAT FUN! WE EXPLORED CRATERS, GAZED IN AWE AT THE HUGE GLOWING SPHERE OF THE EARTH RISING, AND TOOK MOVIES OF EACH OTHER LEAPING TWENTY FEET UPWARDS..."
"WE HAD LANDED ON THE VERY EDGE OF THE MOON'S FAMILIAR FACE... AND SO WE WERE SOON EXPLORING THE DARK SIDE! SUDDENLY WE CAME UPON A SCENE THAT COMPLETELY ASTOUNDED US..."
A... A GIVILIZATION ON THE MOON!
IT... IT CAN'T BE! IT LOOKS LIKE... A LANDING FIELD!
FLYING SAUCERS!
3.

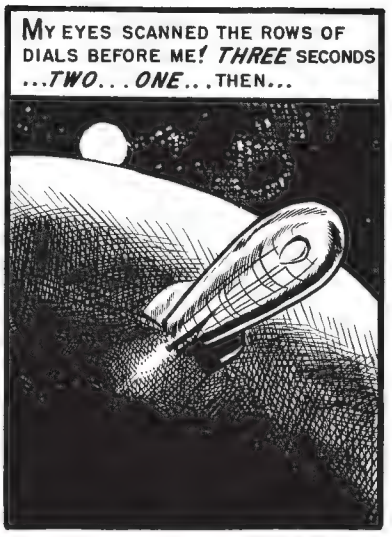
"THEN THEY WERE UPON US..."
WALDEN! LET'S GET BACK TO THE SHIP! WE MUST...
AAAGH!
"I SAW MY HELPLESS FRIENDS DESTOYED BEFORE MY EYES..."
EEYOW!!
"I WONDERED WHY THEY LET ME LIVE! BUT LATER, IN THEIR CITY..."
PARLEZ-VOUS FRANÇAIS? PARLE I'TALIANO? Вы говорите по-русски? DO YOU SPEAK ENGLISH? Sprechen sie Deutsch? PUHUKO SINÄ SUOMIA? SPREEKT U NEDERLANDS?
WH... HOW DO THEY KNOW SO MANY EARTH LANGUAGES?
"I DECIDED NOT TO CO-OPERATE... BUT THEY HAD AN ANSWER TO THAT ONE..."
OUCH! WHY... YOU MISERABLE LITTLE...
AH! YOU SPEAK ENGLISH! WELCOME TO OUR CITY, N'KYZMEJ!
BUT HOW DO YOU...
KNOW YOUR LANGUAGES? WE'VE BEEN EXPLORING YOUR EARTH FOR YEARS! OH, FORGIVE ME... MY NAME IS BOK!
NOW LET US HAVE A CHAT! FOR INSTANCE, HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD ATOMIC POWERED ROCKETS ...AND HOW MANY DO YOU HAVE? AND HOW DID YOU KNOW WE WERE HERE?
WHY... HE'S AFRAID!
"IN THE LONG HOURS THAT FOLLOWED, THEY THREATENED, CAJOLED, PROMISED AND BULLIED ME FOR INFORMATION... AND SLOWLY, OMINOUSLY, THE FULL IMPORT OF THEIR DESIGNS PENETRATED TO MY FALTERING MIND..."
OUR TECHINICAL DEVELOPMENT IS, I DARE SAY, A THOUSAND YEARS AHEAD OF YOURS! ONE OF OUR SHIPS COULD DESTROY A SQUADRON OF YOUR FIGHTING CRAFT...
HOWEVER THEIR USE WILL NOT BE REQUIRED! FOR WHEN WE STRIKE, EARTH WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DEFEND ITSELF!
WHY... HOW..?!
"I REGISTERED THE EXPECTED EXPRESSION OF DISMAY... AND SEEING IT, THEY PRESSED THEIR ADVANTAGE..."
AT THE BOTTOM OF THAT SHAFT, AT THE VERY CORE OF THE MOON, RESTS THE GREATEST BOMB EVER PRODUCED! WHEN THE TIME COMES, AND OUR FLEET IS FAR OUT IN SPACE, WE WILL DETONATE IT... AND FRAGMENTS OF THE SHATTERED MOON WILL RAIN DOWN UPON THE EARTH!
4.

LET ME SEE...THEY THINK WE KNOW ABOUT THEM! MAYBE I CAN SCARE 'EM INTO SOMETHING...
THEN IT'S TOO BAD YOU WILL NEVER CARRY OUT YOUR LITTLE PLAN! YOU SEE, OUR ROCKET WAS ONLY THE ADVANCE SCOUT FOR A FLEET OF TEN THOUSAND WHICH ARE ON THEIR WAY HERE RIGHT NOW!
"BOK LEFT ME IN A STATE OF EXTREME AGITATION... AND SHORTLY I WAS IN THE MIDST OF A VERITABLE BEE-HIVE OF ACTIVITY! MY RUSE HAD WORKED! I HAD PRECIPITATED WHAT I HOPED WOULD BE A PREMATURE INVASION..."
THANK YOU FOR YOUR WARNING, MY FRIEND! IN RETURN I GIVE YOU THE HONOR OF BEING THE LAST MAN ON THE MOON...YOU MAY PERISH WITH IT!
NO! YOU WOULDN'T LEAVE ME HERE!
"BUT SOON I WAS ALONE...ALONE ON THE MOON..."
THERE THEY GO! NOW TO SEE IF I'M RIGHT ABOUT MY STRENGTH! WITH THIS SIX TO ONE RATIO OF GRAVITY, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO...
AHH!
"I DONNED MY SPACE HELMET AND LEFT THE PROTECTIVE SHELL OF THE LITTLE MEN! AS I PLUNGED THROUGH THE EERIE, HALF-LIT SILENCE IN GREAT THIRTY-FOOT STRIDES, IT SEEMED I WOULD NEVER FIND THE SHIP..."
"I SHALL NOT GO INTO DETAIL ABOUT THE TERRORS OF THAT NIGHT...MY OWN SHADOW, A GROTESQUE, MILE-LONG GIANT, CAPERING BEFORE ME, MOCKING MY FUTILE EFFORTS, AND BLOCKING MY ALREADY POOR VISION..."
"AS MY MIND STAGGERED UNDER THE HORROR OF BEING LOST AMONG THE FORBIDDING CRATERS OF THAT PLANETARY POWDER KEG, I STUMBLED UPON IT! IN MY FRANTIC HASTE, THE LAST MINUTES OF PREPARATION DRAGGED BY LIKE DECADES, UNTIL FINALLY I TURNED MY FACE SPACEWARD AGAIN..."
GOT...TO...MAKE IT...GOT TO...WARN...THE PEOPLE...
5

"A HOARSE SHOUT OF JOY WELLED UP WITHIN ME AS EARTH'S WESTERN HEMISPHERE LOOMED UP ON THE SCREEN! BUT I KNEW THE LANDING WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ONE MAN TO ACCOMPLISH, SO I CRASHED THE 'COLUMBIA' INTO THE SEA"..
I DRIFTED THREE HOURS OFF THE VIRGINIA COAST BEFORE A FISHING BOAT SPOTTED ME... HOW HAPPY I WAS! BUT LITTLE DID I KNOW THE ATTITUDE THAT WOULD GREET ME...
GET HIM!
IN FACT, MEN WHO SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER TRIED TO HAVE ME COMMITTED TO AN ASYLUM...
WHAT..?
COME QUIETLY, CHAUNCEY... LET'S NOT HAVE A SCENE!
PLEASE BELIEVE ME...THEY'VE MISTAKEN ME FOR SOMEONE ELSE! YOU MUST LISTEN...SPREAD THE WORD! GET UNDERGROUND!
C'MON, NAPOLEON... YOU'RE GOIN' BACK INTO EXILE!
NO! NO! YOU DON'T REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE DOING! I MUST...
BUT...WAS HE A REAL SCIENTIST? HE SURE SOUNDED GEN-U-WINE!
NAH! THIS IS CHAUNCEY SCHULTZ... A MILKMAN FROM TEANECK WHO WENT OFF HIS NUT FROM READIN' TOO MANY SCIENCE FICTION COMIC BOOKS!
YOU KNOW, THIS IS SILLY... BUT I ALMOST FOUND MYSELF BELIEVING HIM!
YEAH! SAY, AL, YOU DON'T SUPPOSE...
ROARRRR
THE END.

COME NOW ON A FANTASTIC ADVENTURE. . .FOR THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT MAN WILL ATTEMPT...

A TRIP TO A STAR!
WOOD
THE HUGE CROWD THAT HAD GATHERED TO WITNESS THE MOMENTOUS SPECTACLE...THE TAKE-OFF OF OUR ROCKETSHIP IN WHAT WAS MAN'S FIRST ATTEMPT TO CONQUER INTERSTELLAR SPACE...CHEERED, AS JERRY AND I MOUNTED THE LAUNCHING-PLATFORM...
GENTLEMEN! WE WISH YOU GOD-SPEED... AND A SAFE VOYAGE!
THANK YOU, SENATOR!
ALL HATCHES SEALED, DON! EVERYTHING'S READY!
PLEASE CLEAR THE LAUNCHING PLATFORM! TAKE-OFF IN TWO MINUTES!
1.



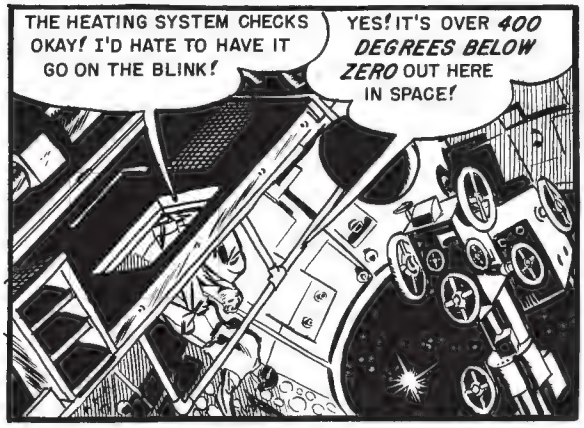
THE FORCE OF THE INITIAL THRUST OF THE TAKE-OFF SLAMMED US BACK INTO OUR SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED SEATS, AND I FELT THE SKIN ON MY FACE PULL TAUT AS WE ZOOMED SKYWARD...

A SWITCH WAS THROWN AND AGAIN THE SPACE-SHIP JOLTED FORWARD AT STILL GREATER SPEED AS THE ATOMIC ENGINES TOOK OVER...

RATE OF ASCENT... 4000 MILES PER HOUR!
WE'LL HOLD THIS SPEED TILL WE LEAVE EARTH'S GRAVITATIONAL FIELD! THEN WE'LL TURN ON THE LIGHT-ENERGIZING-TURBINES!

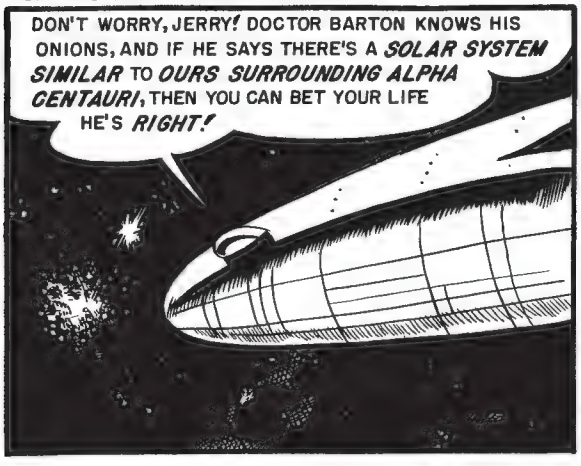
THE LIGHT-ENERGIZING-TURBINES WERE THE POWER-PLANTS THAT WOULD CARRY OUR SHIP INTO SPACE AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT...186,000 MILES PER SECOND!

IT WAS *TRUE! ALPHA CENTAURI*, THE *NEAREST* STAR TO OUR SOLAR SYSTEM, WAS *FOUR LIGHT YEARS* AWAY! TRAVELING AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT, IT WOULD TAKE US FOUR YEARS TO REACH IT...



AND WHEN PLUTO APPEARED ON OUR SCREEN, WE KNEW WE HAD REACHED THE OUTER BOUNDARIES OF OUR OWN SOLAR SYSTEM...
I HOPE DOCTOR BARTON IS *CORRECT!*

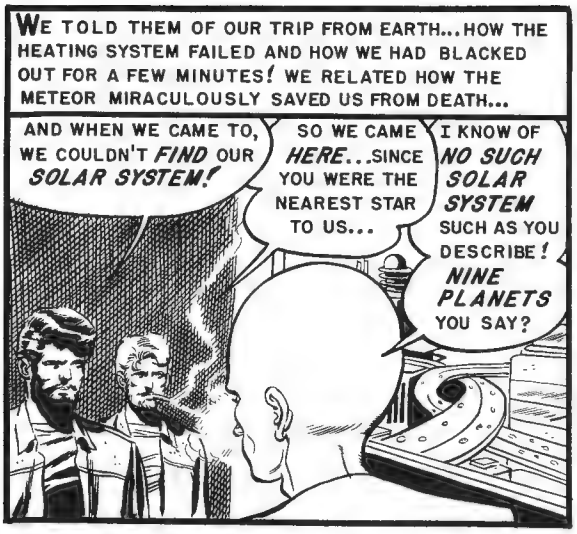
DOCTOR BARTON OF THE ASTRO-PHYSICS DEPARTMENT OF FARNSWORTH UNIVERSITY WAS THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS TRIP TO ALPHA CENTAURI...


DON'T WORRY, JERRY! DOCTOR BARTON KNOWS HIS ONIONS, AND IF HE SAYS THERE'S A *SOLAR SYSTEM SIMILAR* TO *OURS SURROUNDING ALPHA CENTAURI*, THEN YOU CAN BET YOUR LIFE HE'S *RIGHT!*

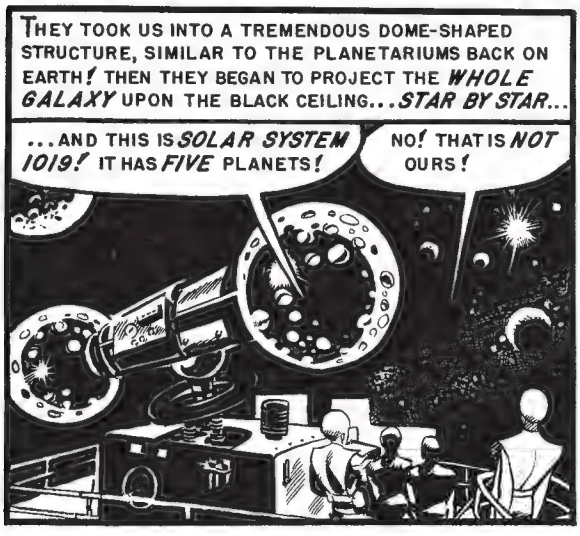
AND SO WE SETTLED DOWN TO THE LONG FOUR YEAR TRIP AHEAD! WHEN WE HAD BEEN OUT ABOUT *EIGHT MONTHS...*

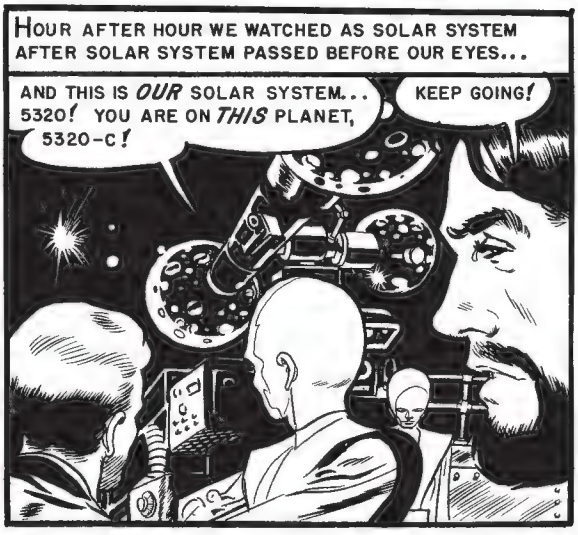
SUDDENLY...I COULDN'T MOVE! THE NEXT THING I KNEW, I BLACKED OUT...
WHEN I OPENED MY EYES, IT WAS WARM IN OUR SPACE SHIP ONCE MORE! MY FINGERTIPS AND TOES BURNED... BUT OTHERWISE I FELT ALL RIGHT...
DON...YOU OKAY?
YEAH! BUT WHO FIXED THE HEATING SYSTEM?
THERE'S YOUR ANSWER!
A COMET! IT MUST HAVE PASSED CLOSE TO THE SHIP AND STARTED THE HEATING SYSTEM WORKING AGAIN!
DON! LOOK! ON THE ASTRO-SCREEN! ALPHA CENTAURI... IT'S GONE!
WHA..? YOU'RE RIGHT, JERRY!
AND THE SUN...WITH OUR SOLAR SYSTEM! IT'S GONE, TOO!
WHAT'S HAPPENED?
I DON'T KNOW!
LOOK, JERRY! THERE'S A STRANGE STAR! LET'S HEAD FOR IT! IT'S THE NEAREST ONE TO US!
MIGHT AS WELL! WE'VE GOT TO GO SOMEWHERE! WE CAN'T JUST STAY OUT HERE IN SPACE FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES!
HERE GOES, THEN!
4

IT TOOK US ALMOST SIX MONTHS TO REACH THAT STRANGE STAR! ONE DAY, AS WE NEARED IT...
THERE ARE THREE PLANETS SURROUNDING THE STAR, JERRY!
ACCORDING TO THE ASTRO-RADAR-CALCULATOR, THE OUTER PLANET HAS A DIAMETER OF 7000 MILES... ABOUT THE SAME AS OUR EARTH!
AND IT IS AS FAR FROM ITS STAR AS EARTH IS FROM THE SUN! LET'S LAND THERE!
PREPARE FOR DECELERATION AND APPROACH...
THE LIGHT-ENERGIZING POWER PLANTS WERE TURNED OFF AS WE ENTERED THE PLANET'S GRAVITATIONAL FIELD...
GET READY TO LAND!
ROCKET JETS ON...
I SWUNG THE SHIP AROUND SO THAT WE SLIPPED BACKWARDS TOWARD THE PLANET'S SURFACE... THE JETS SLOWING OUR FALL! THEN...
BUMPETY BUMP!
WE HAD MADE IT! A QUICK TEST CONFIRMED THE FACT THAT THE AIR WAS THIN... BUT ADEQUATE TO MAINTAIN HUMAN LIFE! WE OPENED THE HATCH...
LOOK, JERRY! PEOPLE!
STRANGE CREATURES, AREN'T THEY?
HOW ARE WE GOING TO SPEAK WITH THEM, DON?
I DON'T KNOW! I'LL GIVE IT A TRY, ANYWAY! HELLO THERE!
HAK PUA!
THE STRANGE CREATURES TOOK US TO A FANTASTIC AND BEAUTIFUL CITY! IN A MATTER OF ONE WEEK, TWO OF THEM HAD MASTERED OUR LANGUAGE AND WE WERE ABLE TO CONVERSE...
AND YOU SAY YOU COME FROM ANOTHER SOLAR SYSTEM!
THAT'S RIGHT! ONLY OUR SUN HAS NINE PLANETS!
5


WE TOLD THEM OF OUR TRIP FROM EARTH...HOW THE HEATING SYSTEM FAILED AND HOW WE HAD BLACKED OUT FOR A FEW MINUTES! WE RELATED HOW THE METEOR MIRACULOUSLY SAVED US FROM DEATH...
AND WHEN WE CAME TO, WE COULDN'T FIND OUR SOLAR SYSTEM!
SO WE CAME HERE...SINCE YOU WERE THE NEAREST STAR TO US...
I KNOW OF NO SUCH SOLAR SYSTEM SUCH AS YOU DESCRIBE! NINE PLANETS YOU SAY?

COME! LET US SEARCH FOR YOUR SOLAR SYSTEM!
HOW CAN WE DO THAT?
SIMPLE! WE CAN SHOW YOU THE WHOLE UNIVERSE!


THEY TOOK US INTO A TREMENDOUS DOME-SHAPED STRUCTURE, SIMILAR TO THE PLANETARIUMS BACK ON EARTH! THEN THEY BEGAN TO PROJECT THE WHOLE GALAXY UPON THE BLACK CEILING...STAR BY STAR...
...AND THIS IS SOLAR SYSTEM 1019! IT HAS FIVE PLANETS!
NO! THAT IS NOT OURS!


HOUR AFTER HOUR WE WATCHED AS SOLAR SYSTEM AFTER SOLAR SYSTEM PASSED BEFORE OUR EYES...
AND THIS IS OUR SOLAR SYSTEM... 5320! YOU ARE ON THIS PLANET, 5320-C!
KEEP GOING!

THEN...
BUT OUR SOLAR SYSTEM WASN'T THERE!
THAT IS IT, GENTLEMEN! YOU HAVE SEEN OUR WHOLE GALAXY!

IT IS MY THEORY THAT YOU COME FROM A DIFFERENT GALAXY!
WE COULDN'T! WE DIDN'T TRAVEL THAT FAR!

GENTLEMEN! YOU MUST HAVE PASSED THROUGH A SPACE WARP!
6

A SPACE WARP? WHAT IS THAT?
SIMPLE! YOU SLIPPED FROM OUR THREE-DIMENSIONAL UNIVERSE INTO A FOURTH DIMENSIONAL UNIVERSE, AND THEN RE-ENTERED OUR THREE DIMENSIONAL UNIVERSE AT A DIFFERENT PLACE FROM WHERE YOU LEFT IT!
I...I DON'T SEE HOW...
WATCH! I TAKE THIS TWO-DIMENSIONAL PIECE OF PAPER! LET IT REPRESENT OUR THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORLD! I PLACE MY FINGER TIP HERE...
MY FINGERTIP REPRESENTS YOUR SPACE SHIP! AS I LIFT IT INTO THE AIR, MY FINGERTIP ENTERS A THIRD-DIMENSION...JUST AS YOUR SPACE-SHIP ENTERED A FOURTH-DIMENSION! WHEN I PLACE IT BACK ON THE PAPER, I PLACE IT IN A DIFFERENT PLACE! SO DID YOU RETURN AT A DIFFERENT PLACE!
AND YOU THINK THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED?
YES! COME, WE WILL LOOK AT OTHER GALAXIES!
WE SAT DOWN AGAIN IN THE DARKENED DOME-SHAPED STRUCTURE! SUDDENLY... THERE WAS OUR SOLAR-SYSTEM... THE SUN... THE EARTH... THE NINE PLANETS... IN ALL ITS GLORY!
OH...I BEG YOUR PARDON!
THAT'S IT!
THAT'S OUR SOLAR SYSTEM!
WHAT? BUT IT CAN'T BE!
THAT IS SOLAR SYSTEM 5320... THIS SOLAR SYSTEM AS IT WAS OVER ONE MILLION YEARS AGO! BEFORE THE GREAT METEOR SWEPT AWAY THE OUTER SIX SATELLITES!
BUT THAT'S OUR SOLAR SYSTEM! LOOK! THERE'S EARTH... SATURN... THE NINE PLANETS!
GENTLEMEN! I WAS WRONG! YOU DID NOT PASS THROUGH A SPACE WARP! YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOUR HEATING SYSTEM FAILED? WELL, YOU WERE "QUICK-FROZEN" FOR ONE MILLION YEARS! THEN... THE PASSING METEOR THAWED YOU! YOU ARE BACK ON EARTH... ONE MILLION YEARS AFTER YOU LEFT IT!
THE END!
7

THEY LEFT EARTH TO ESCAPE ATOMIC WAR... AND THEN, AFTER FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS THEY MADE THEIR...
RETURN
WOOD
WELL, GENTLEMEN! THERE IT IS! THE PLANET THAT WE HAVE TRAVELED NINE YEARS TO SEE!
IN THE TIME THAT IS LEFT BEFORE WE LAND, ALBO, TELL US WHY WE HAVE MADE THIS TRIP FROM OUR OWN PLANET!
CERTAINLY, ZAK! THIS PLANET THAT WE ARE VIEWING ON OUR TELE-SCREEN WAS...OVER FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS AGO...THE HOME OF OUR ANCESTORS! THEY WERE BORN THERE AND LIVED THERE IN AN ANCIENT CIVILIZATION...A CIVILIZATION CONSTANTLY PLAGUED BY WARS!
1

"BUT IN SPITE OF THESE BARBARIC ENCOUNTERS, THE CIVILIZATION GREW AND FLOURISHED! MANY SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES WERE MADE! THEN, DURING ONE OF THESE WARS..."
GENTLEMEN! WE HAVE HARNESSED THE ATOM! WE CONTROL IT!
LET US USE IT TO END THIS WAR THAT IS UPON US!
"AND SO, ONE OF THE POWERS IN THIS DEVASTATING WAR UNLEASHED UPON THE OTHER A MIGHTY ATOM BOMB..."
"THE RESULT WAS AN IMMEDIATE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES! BUT AFTER THE WAR, THERE STILL WAS NO PEACE! WRANGLING AND BICKERING AMONG THE WINNING POWERS KEPT THE PEOPLE UNDER CONSTANT THREATS OF ANOTHER WAR..."
JUST LET IT COME! WE HAVE DEVELOPED NEWER AND BIGGER ATOMIC WEAPONS!
"TENSION MOUNTED...AND FINALLY, A MORE HORRIFYING AND DEVASTATING WAR BECAME INEVITABLE! AT A MEETING OF THE GREATEST SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL MINDS OF THE PLANET..."
GENTLEMEN! THE DEVELOPMENTS THAT WE SCIENTISTS HAVE MADE IN THE FIELD OF ATOMIC ENERGY HAVE BEEN TURNED INTO INSTRUMENTS OF DESTRUCTION!
AGAIN WE ARE FACED WITH WAR! THIS TIME IT WILL DESTROY ALL CIVILIZATION! THINGS HAVE GOTTEN OUT OF CONTROL! I PROPOSE WE LEAVE OUR PLANET BEFORE THIS HORROR BEGINS...
HEAR!
HEAR!
I GIVE YOU PROFESSOR VON KUGON, EXPERT ON INTER-STELLAR TRAVEL!
GENTLEMEN! AND LADIES! I PROPOSE THAT WE CONSTRUCT A HUGE SPACE-SHIP... LARGE ENOUGH TO HOLD THE BEST MINDS OF THIS CIVILIZATION!
I PROPOSE THAT WE SEND THIS SHIP INTO SPACE TO ANOTHER SOLAR SYSTEM, TO BUILD ANOTHER CIVILIZATION... ONE OF PEACE, NOT OF WAR!
2

"AND SO, WORK ON THE HUGE SPACE-SHIP WAS BEGUN! IT WAS TO BE ATOMIC POWERED AND ALMOST ONE MILE LONG... BIG ENOUGH TO HOLD SEVEN THOUSAND PEOPLE..."
AN AMAZING CRAFT, PROFESSOR! AMAZING! AH... WHAT IS YOUR DESTINATION?
THE PLANET EXODO OF THE STAR SIRIUS... NINE LIGHT YEARS AWAY!
BUT THAT WILL TAKE YOU HUNDREDS OF YEARS TO REACH!
FOUR THOUSAND YEARS, TO BE EXACT! WE WILL BE TRAVELING AT THE RATE OF 130,000 MILES PER HOUR!
BUT...THEN YOU WILL NEVER SEE YOUR DESTINATION!
NO! OF COURSE NOT! WE WILL LIVE OUT OUR LIVES IN THE SHIP...AND OUR CHILDREN AND OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN WILL DO THE SAME!
BUT THE DAY WILL COME WHEN OUR DESCENDANTS WILL REACH THEIR DESTINATION! AND THEN, WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WE SCIENTISTS HAVE PASSED DOWN TO THEM, THEY WILL BUILD A CIVILIZATION OF LASTING PEACE AND SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENTS FAR BEYOND OUR WILDEST DREAMS!
"AND SO, THE GREAT SPACE-SHIP WAS BUILT! WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, IT WAS FITTED WITH ALL OF THE TECHNICAL ADVANCEMENTS KNOWN TO OUR ANCESTORS..."
WE WILL HAVE SOLAR-FARMS TO GROW VEGETABLES!
AND BREEDING-STALLS TO PRODUCE ANIMALS FOR FOOD!
"THEY BROUGHT IN MACHINERY... EQUIPMENT... RAW MATERIALS... CHEMICALS... BOOKS... RECORDS... EVERYTHING NEEDED FOR SO LONG A TRIP..."
THE SCIENTISTS AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE BEGINNING TO BOARD THE SHIP, SIR!
GOOD! WE WILL TAKE OFF WHEN EVERYTHING IS READY!
3

"SOON, THOSE WHO WERE TO MAKE THE TRIP HAD CLIMBED ABOARD AND SETTLED DOWN! THEY KNEW FULL WELL THEIR FATE! THEY WOULD SPEND THE REST OF THEIR LIVES TRAVELING THROUGH SPACE, AWAY FROM THEIR THREATENED PLANET..."
EVERYTHING IS READY! PREPARE FOR LAUNCHING!
"THE HUGE ATOMIC MOTORS STARTED! THE ROCKET VENTS WERE OPENED! THEN..."
HOLD ON! HERE GOES!
"THE DEAFENING ROAR OF THE INITIAL THRUST WAS HEARD FOR MANY MILES AROUND! THE HUGE SHIP ROSE SLOWLY, GATHERING SPEED..."
WE'RE ON OUR WAY!
"FASTER AND FASTER IT SHOT INTO THE BLUE.... UNTIL IT HAD REACHED ITS TOP SPEED... 130,000 MILES PER HOUR..."
...NOW LEAVING GRAVITATIONAL FIELD!
"OUT INTO THE SOLAR SYSTEM IT SPED... PAST FAMILIAR PLANETS..."
"AND THEN ON INTO THE VASTNESS OF SPACE... TOWARD SIRIUS... AND ITS PLANET EXODO..."
THIS PLANET WE ARE GOING TO! IS IT LIKE THE ONE WE HAVE LEFT?
EXACTLY! THAT IS WHY WE PICKED IT!
"AND SO, THE TRIP HAD BEGUN! A TRIP THAT TOOK FOUR THOUSAND YEARS TO COMPLETE..."
BUT, ALBO! IT HAS TAKEN US ONLY NINE YEARS TO RETURN!
YES, ZAK! BUT WE TRAVEL AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT... 186,000 MILES PER SECOND!
4

THIS IS WHY NO ONE EVER RETURNED BEFORE!
TRAVELING AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT WAS ONLY DEVELOPED *RECENTLY* ON EXODO!
TELL US MORE, ALBO! WHAT HAPPENED ON THAT FOUR-THOUSAND-YEAR TRIP?
MANY THINGS, ZAK! GENERATIONS WERE BORN AND GENERATIONS DIED!
"THE SCIENTISTS AND THEIR WIVES THAT HAD ORIGINALLY SET OUT HAD LONG SINCE DIED! BUT THEIR CHILDREN HAD BEEN SCHOOLED IN THE PURPOSE OF THE TRIP..."
STRANGE! WE LIVE IN PEACE HERE IN OUR SPACE-SHIP... AND YET THEY COULD NOT, BACK THERE!
I WONDER IF CIVILIZATION STILL EXISTS ON OUR MOTHER PLANET, OR WHETHER AN ATOMIC WAR HAS DESTROYED IT!
THAT IS WHY OUR FATHERS AND MOTHERS STARTED THIS TRIP, JOHN! THEY DID NOT WANT TO REMAIN TO FIND OUT!
"AND SO, GENTLEMEN! AFTER FOUR THOUSAND YEARS...ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY GENERATIONS...OUR ANCESTORS CAME TO *EXODO!* THERE THEY BEGAN TO BUILD THE CIVILIZATION THAT *WE* COME FROM..."
THE MOUNTAINS ARE FULL OF ORES...IRON...COPPER...LEAD!
GOOD! WE WILL TAKE CARE NOT TO PLUNDER OUR PLANET'S RAW MATERIALS AS *THEY* DID! WE WILL *CONSERVE!*
"SOON URANIUM WAS FOUND AND THE FIRST ATOMIC AGE BEGAN! OUR PLANET'S CIVILIZATION GREW AND PROSPERED! IT ADVANCED FAR BEYOND THE CIVILIZATION OUR ANCESTORS HAD LEFT BEHIND!"
AND AFTER FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS, WE DISCOVERED THE SECRET OF *LIGHT!* WE WERE ABLE TO HARNESS ITS ENERGY... AND TRAVEL AS *FAST AS LIGHT ITSELF!*
LOOK! WE ARE COMING CLOSE! I CAN ALMOST MAKE OUT THE MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS!
5

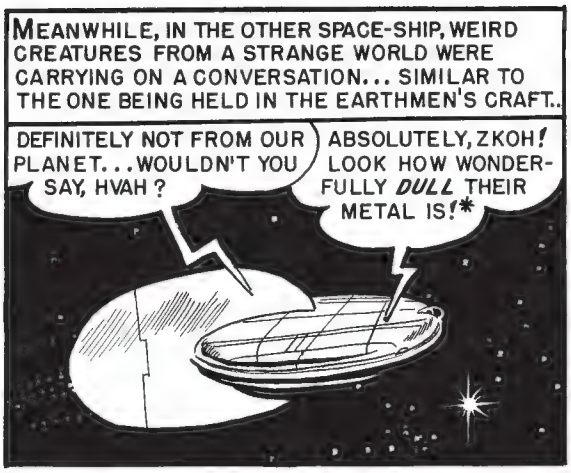
THE SAUCER-SHAPED SPACE-SHIP THAT ALBO AND ZAK AND THEIR COMPANIONS WERE IN ZOOMED LOW OVER A CITY...
IT LOOKS STRANGELY FAMILIAR!
I KNOW! I KNOW!
IT LOOKS LIKE THE PICTURES OUR ANCESTORS BROUGHT TO EXODO OF THE CIVILIZATION THEY LEFT HERE!
BUT, IT CANNOT BE! YOU MEAN THEY HAVE MADE NO ADVANCEMENTS IN OVER FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS?
THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE! LET US LAND IN THAT SQUARE DOWN THERE!
THE DISC-SHAPED CRAFT DESCENDED INTO A TEAMING AREA! PEOPLE RUSHED IN MANY DIRECTIONS TO ESCAPE! AUTOS SCREECHED TO A STOP...
THEY ARE HUGE! MUCH BIGGER THAN WE ARE!
I DON'T UNDER-STAND!
CAUTIOUSLY, THE CROWDS RETURNED TO EXAMINE THE ROUND FLAT AIR-CRAFT AND ITS TINY OCCUPANTS...
THEY SPEAK A STRANGE LANGUAGE, ALBO!
I WILL GRASP IT IN SHORT ORDER!
ALBO HAD NO TROUBLE MASTERING THE LANGUAGE. THE GRAMMAR WAS SIMPLE AND THE VOCABULARY SMALL! IN A MATTER OF HOURS, HE WAS CONVERSING FREELY WITH A RENOWNED SCIENTIST...
BUT I CANNOT BELIEVE YOUR TALE, ALBO! OUR CIVILIZATION IS LESS THAN TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS OLD!
BUT OUR ANCESTORS LEFT A CIVILIZATION HERE OVER FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS AGO!
IT CANNOT BE! OUR GEOLOGISTS TELL US THAT EARTH WAS WITHOUT LIFE FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS AGO!
OH! I SEE! THEN THEY DID HAVE THE ATOMIC WAR! NO ONE WAS LEFT! NO LIFE AT ALL!
6.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND! YOU ARE TRYING TO TELL ME THAT IN WHAT WE KNOW AS PREHISTORIC TIMES THERE WAS A CIVILIZATION SIMILAR TO OURS THAT WAS WIPED OUT BY AN ATOMIC WAR?
THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT HAS HAPPENED, PROFESSOR!
BUT WE HERE IN 1950! WE, TOO, FACE AN ATOMIC WAR!
YOU HAVE NOT PROGRESSED MUCH, HAVE YOU PROFESSOR?
HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF! IS THAT WHAT IS HAPPENING, ALBO?
PRECISELY, PROFESSOR! WELL, WE MUST LEAVE!
GOOD-BYE, SIR! GOOD LUCK! I HOPE YOU CAN STOP THE COMING DESTRUCTION! MY ANCESTORS COULDN'T!
GOOD-BYE, ALBO!
THE SAUCER-SHAPED SPACE-SHIP ROSE SLOWLY FROM THE CAMPUS OF THE GREAT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY UPON WHICH IT STOOD AND SPED SKYWARD...
UNBELIEVABLE, ZAK! ISN'T IT?
YES! THEIR "EARTH" IS EXACTLY THE WAY IT WAS THEN!
MEANWHILE BACK ON EARTH...
YES, PROFESSOR?
CALL A MEETING OF ALL THE GREAT SCIENTISTS OF THE WORLD! I HAVE A PROPOSAL TO MAKE TO THEM!
AND SOON AFTER...
GENTLEMEN! WE ARE FACED WITH AN ATOMIC WAR! ONE THAT MAY DESTROY CIVILIZATION! I PROPOSE WE LEAVE THIS PLANET EARTH BEFORE THIS HORROR BEGINS!
LISTEN TO EINS
NUCLEAR PHYS
THE END
7

IT WAS A CHANCE ENCOUNTER IN SPACE.. WHICH COULD ONLY END IN...
DEADLOCK!
CAPTAIN!
WOODY
THEY HAD BEEN TRAVELING FOR TWO YEARS, ONE MONTH, AND TEN DAYS WHEN THEY FIRST SAW THE OTHER SPACE-SHIP...
LOOK, CAPTAIN! ON OUR ASTRO-RADAR SCREEN! A STRANGE-LOOKING CRAFT!
WHAT? IMPOSSIBLE!
THERE ARE NO OTHER SPACE-SHIPS FROM EARTH IN THIS PART OF THE GALAXY!
IT DOES NOT LOOK LIKE ONE OF OURS! IT SEEMS TO BE MADE OF A QUEER METALLIC SUBSTANCE! NOTICE HOW IT GLOWS!
1.

BUT...WHERE CAN IT COME FROM? WE KNOW OF *NO OTHER* CIVILIZATION IN THIS GALAXY, EXCEPT *OURS* ON *EARTH!*
PERHAPS IT IS FROM *ANOTHER* GALAXY! ONE WE HAVE NOT, AS YET, EXPLORED!
ABOUT HOW FAR AWAY WOULD YOU SAY IT IS, SERGEANT?
RADAR-SCOPE CALCULATES IT TO BE ABOUT SEVEN THOUSAND MILES... MOVING TOWARD US!
STOP OUR SHIP! WE'LL WAIT FOR IT TO GET CLOSER!
CUT ENERGIZING JETS! WE'RE STOPPING THE SHIP!
RIGHT!
THE SLEEK SPACE-SHIP FROM EARTH SLOWED TO A STOP! IT HUNG IN THE VELVETY BLACKNESS OF SPACE SILENTLY... WAITING...
HOW FAR *NOW*, SERGEANT?
FOUR HUNDRED MILES, SIR! *SHE'S STOPPED, TOO!*
H-M-M-M-M! THEY'RE AS LEERY OF *US* AS *WE* ARE OF *THEM!*
WONDER WHAT THEY *LOOK* LIKE?
NO TELLING! *LIFE* CAN TAKE *MANY FORMS! LIQUID...GASEOUS... ANYTHING!*
UGH! CUT IT OUT! YOU MAKE ME *SHUDDER!*
CAPTAIN! ALIEN SHIP *MOVING TOWARD US AGAIN... SLOWLY!*
OKAY! WE'LL DO THE SAME! START THE ENERGIZERS!
2.

THE TWO SPACE-SHIPS MOVED SLOWLY, CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN THEM...
FIFTY MILES, SIR! STILL COMING AT US!
HOLD HER ON COURSE, SERGEANT! WE'LL CALL HER BLUFF!
TWO MILES, CAPTAIN! SHE'S STOPPING!
GOOD! THIS IS CLOSE ENOUGH! STOP OUR SHIP ALSO!
NOW, WHAT DO WE DO?
WAIT, I GUESS! SEE WHAT THEY DO!
SHE'S DEFINITELY NOT FROM EARTH, SIR! SHE SEEMS TO EMPLOY A DIFFERENT POWER PRINCIPLE THAN WE DO!
UGLY SHAPE, TOO! AND YET...IT COULD BE A MORE EFFICIENT SHAPE! I WONDER!
PICKING UP RADIO SIGNALS, SIR! SHE'S TRYING TO CONTACT US!
DO THEY MAKE SENSE?
JUMBLED BLEEPS! THAT'S ABOUT ALL!
SEND OUT A FEW SIGNALS ON THE SAME WAVE-LENGTH, SERGEANT!
SHE'S ANSWERING, SIR! I BEEPED HER TWICE...AND SHE RETURNED TWO! SHALL I HOOK UP THE MIKE?
YES! I'LL TALK TO THEM!
3


MEANWHILE, IN THE OTHER SPACE-SHIP, WEIRD CREATURES FROM A STRANGE WORLD WERE CARRYING ON A CONVERSATION... SIMILAR TO THE ONE BEING HELD IN THE EARTHMEN'S CRAFT..
DEFINITELY NOT FROM OUR PLANET...WOULDN'T YOU SAY, HVAH?
ABSOLUTELY, ZKOH! LOOK HOW WONDERFULLY *DULL* THEIR METAL IS!*

*EDITORS' NOTE: THIS IS A ROUGH TRANSLATION, YOU UNDERSTAND! THEY ARE, OF COURSE, CONVERSING IN THEIR OWN TONGUE!

AND BACK AT THE EARTHMEN'S SPACE SHIP...
SQUA-TRUNT! SPA-FON-BUELL-BAH!
THAT'S ONE OF THEM, CAPTAIN!
THEIR LANGUAGE IS UGLY, EH, SERGEANT? GUTTURAL!

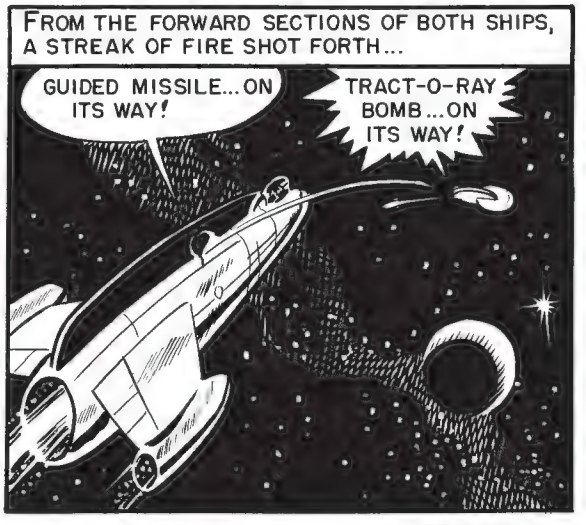
DO YOU THINK THEY'RE FRIENDLY, CAPTAIN?
CAN'T BE TOO SURE, SERGEANT! ORDER THE CREW TO HOOK UP MARK IX...THE AUTOMATIC BRAIN...
THINK IT CAN TRANSLATE THEIR JARGON, CAPTAIN?

WHILE ON THE WEIRD CREATURES' CRAFT...
YES! THE AUTOMATIC BRAIN OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO TRANSLATE THEIR LANGUAGE!
GOOD, HVAH! I'LL SET IT UP!
4

WITH THE AID OF THEIR RESPECTIVE AUTOMATIC-BRAIN-MACHINES, CONVERSATIONS WERE BEGUN BETWEEN THE TWO SPACE-SHIPS...
NO, I'M AFRAID WE *CANNOT* TELL YOU *WHERE* WE ARE *FROM!* HOW DO WE KNOW YOU DO NOT WANT TO *DESTROY US?*
WELL, THE *SAME* FEELING GOES *HERE*, CHUM! WE CAN'T TRUST *YOU* EITHER!
THEN BE ON YOUR WAY!
OH, *NO! YOU FIRST! WE* DON'T WANT TO BE FOLLOWED BACK TO *OUR* HOME PLANET!
WELL, NEITHER DO *WE!* WHAT *NOW?*
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S ONLY *ONE* THING TO *DO*, GUYS!
YES! IT IS OBVIOUS! *ONE* OF US MUST BE *DESTROYED* BY THE OTHER... FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR MOTHER CIVILIZATIONS!
LISTEN! UNDERSTAND THIS! WE'RE *PEACE-LOVING!* WE DON'T *WANT* THIS! BUT...WELL...HOW DO *WE* KNOW WHAT *YOU'RE* LIKE! ONLY *YOUR WORD!*
AND *WE* HAVE ONLY *YOURS*...
YOU *MIGHT* BE NICE GUYS!
AND *YOU* MIGHT BE *ALSO!*
BUT *WE CAN'T RISK IT!*
YES! IT IS *TOO BAD!*
5

OH, BY THE WAY! BEFORE WE HAUL OFF AND BLOW YOU TO BITS, WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELVES?
CERTAINLY! IF YOU WOULD DO THE SAME BEFORE WE DESTROY YOU!

*AGAIN, ONLY A ROUGH TRANSLATION! ED.



WE, THE EDITORS OF ***WEIRD FANTASY,*** WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS ON OUR MAGAZINE! TELL US WHAT YOU ***LIKE*** OR ***DISLIKE*** AND ***WHICH STORY*** YOU ***LIKE BEST!*** YOUR LETTERS ***HELP US*** TO GIVE ***YOU*** THE KIND OF MAG YOU ***WANT!***

ADDRESS MAIL TO:
THE EDITORS,
WEIRD FANTASY
ROOM 706, DEPT. 17
225 LAFAYETTE ST.
N.Y.C., 12, N.Y.

6.

HE WENT BACK IN TIME TO PREVENT THE

SINKING OF THE TITANIC!

THE NOTED BRITISH PHYSICIST, GEORGE SEYMORE, SOLDERED THE LAST WIRE INTO PLACE AND STEPPED BACK TO ADMIRE THE INTRICATE MACHINE! HE PUFFED ON HIS PIPE IN SELF-SATISFACTION...

FINISHED AT LAST! THE CULMINATION OF *TEN YEARS* OF HARD WORK! MY *TEMPORAL-TRAVELING-CAPACITOR* IS FINALLY *COMPLETED!*

HE SAT BACK ON THE PLUSH COUCH THAT STOOD AGAINST ONE WALL OF HIS APPARATUS-CLUTTERED LABORATORY AND GAZED AT IT! THE MACHINE GLITTERED IN THE SOFT LIGHT OF THE OVERHEAD FLUORESCENTS...

HOW *PROUD* MY *PARENTS* WOULD BE OF ME IF THEY WERE *ALIVE!* THEIR ONLY SON... THE INVENTOR OF THE *FIRST SUCCESSFUL TIME-TRAVELING-MACHINE!*

1

GEORGE'S EYES CLOSED, AND HIS THOUGHTS WENT BACK TO THAT FATEFUL NIGHT ALMOST THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS BEFORE... THE NIGHT THE TITANIC STRUCK THE ICEBERG...
HE REMEMBERED THE CONFUSION...THE SCREAMS OF TERROR FROM THE HYSTERICAL PASSENGERS... THE WHIMPERING OF HIS MOTHER AS SHE CLUTCHED HIM TO HER BREAST...
MOMMY! MOMMY! WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
THE SHIP, GEORGE..IT'S SINKING... SINKING!
GEORGE WAS ONLY SIX YEARS OLD THEN... BUT THE HORROR OF THAT NIGHT BURNED IN HIS MEMORY! THE LAST LIFEBOAT... OVERCROWDED... NO ROOM FOR HIS MOTHER AND FATHER...
NO! NO! YOU CAN'T LEAVE US HERE! WE'LL DIE... DIE!
...AND THE STRANGER! HE COULD SEE IT SO CLEARLY! THE DARK STRANGER WHO SNATCHED HIM FROM HIS SCREAMING MOTHER AND PUSHED HIM INTO THE LOWERING LIFEBOAT...
MY BABY! GIVE ME BACK MY BABY!
THE LIFEBOAT! IT'S HIS ONLY CHANCE! LET HIM GO...
IT WAS LIKE A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE! THE LIFEBOAT HE WAS IN PULLED AWAY FROM THE LISTING LINER! HE WATCHED HIS MOTHER AND FATHER AND THE DARK STRANGER! THEY STOOD AT THE RAIL... THE LOOK OF DEATH ON THEIR FACES.
MOMMY! DADDY! THEY'RE TAKING ME AWAY... SOB... SOB...
AND THEN THE TITANIC WENT DOWN! THE STEAM FROM THE BOILERS HISSED AND SPAT... CHURNING THE SEA INTO A FROTH OF WHITE FOAM! AFTER A WHILE THE WATER WAS CALM AGAIN! OIL SLICKED OUT OVER THE SPOT WHERE THE CRIPPLED LINER HAD VANISHED...
GONE! MOMMY...DADDY... THE DARK MAN... DEAD! DEAD!
HE'D ALWAYS REMEMBERED THAT NIGHT... THAT GHASTLY NIGHT! IT WAS A DEEP, SEARING SCAR IN HIS MEMORY! SUDDENLY, GEORGE SAT BOLT UPRIGHT...
BUT... IF THE TITANIC HADN'T SUNK... THEY'D BE HERE... ALIVE...TODAY!
2.

MAD THOUGHTS RACED THROUGH GEORGE SEYMORE'S TIRED BRAIN! MAD THOUGHTS OF THE PAST... AND TIME... AND FATE...

BUT I *CAN* GO BACK! I CAN *CHANGE* IT...*STOP* IT FROM *HAPPENING!*

SNAP!

BEADS OF PERSPIRATION DANCED ON GEORGE'S WRINKLED BROW...

WHY *NOT?* MY *MACHINE* IS A *SUCCESS!* I'VE *TESTED* IT! *IT WORKS!*

I'LL *DO* IT! I'LL TRANSPORT MYSELF BACK TO *1912!* I'LL BOOK PASSAGE ON THE *TITANIC!* I'LL *SAVE* HER... AND THE FIFTEEN HUNDRED PEOPLE THAT DIED *WITH* HER! MY *MOTHER AND FATHER!* THE *DARK MAN* WHO SAVED ME...

THERE WAS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE! PREPARATIONS! CALCULATIONS! FACTS...FIGURES! EVERYTHING WOULD HAVE TO BE *PERFECT...*

YES, SIR! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

I'D LIKE TO PURCHASE A COSTUME *WARDROBE!* CLOTHES LIKE THOSE WORN IN *1912!*

THEATRICAL COSTUMES

WALK IN

SOON IT WAS DONE! THE RESEARCH...THE PLANNING WAS COMPLETED! GEORGE HAD ALL THE INFORMATION! HE WAS PREPARED! HE DRESSED IN HIS 1912 CLOTHING! HE PACKED A 1912 SUITCASE WITH OTHER 1912 CLOTHES! THEN HE STEPPED INTO HIS TIME-MACHINE...

I'LL SET THE DIAL FOR MARCH...1912! THAT WILL GIVE ME SOME TIME BEFORE SAILING!

MOTORS HUMMED! TINY LIGHTS FLASHED ON AND OFF! DIALS WERE TURNED... RHEOSTATS ADJUSTED... CONTROLS SET! THEN A SWITCH WAS THROWN! GEORGE HAD BEGUN HIS TRIP BACK INTO TIME...

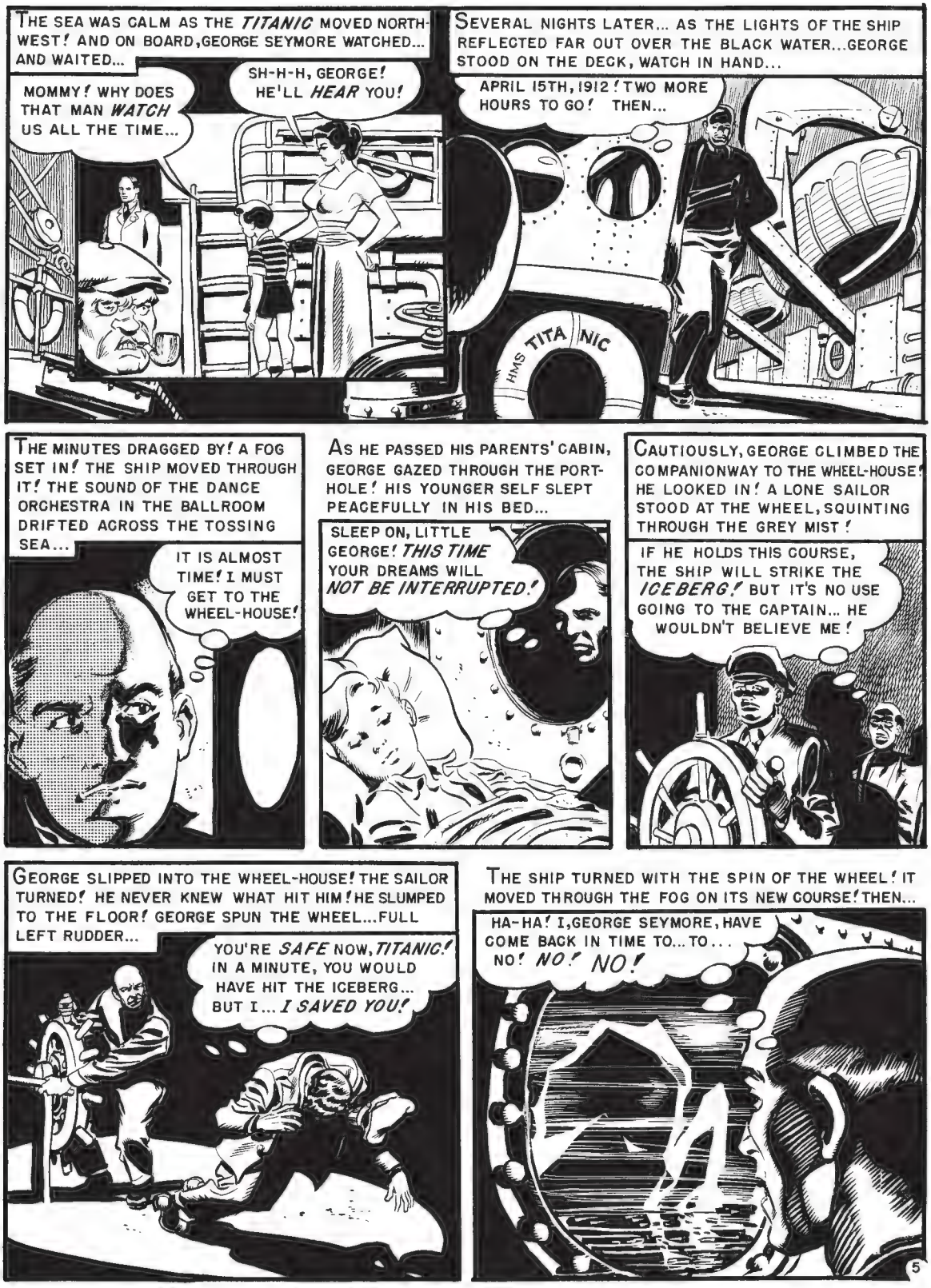
I... FEEL... DIZZY! WEAK... SICK...

SUDDENLY... IT WAS OVER! ALL WAS SILENT! GEORGE OPENED THE DOOR OF HIS MIRACLE APPARATUS AND STEPPED OUT! WHERE ONCE HAD BEEN HIS MODERN LABORATORY, THERE WAS NOW ONLY A WILD UNCULTIVATED FIELD...

SO THIS IS WHAT *SOUTHAMPTON* LOOKED LIKE THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS AGO!

3

CAREFULLY, GEORGE CONCEALED THE TIME-MACHINE WITH BRUSH AND BUSH...
IT MUST BE SAFE FROM TAMPERING! I WILL NEED IT TO RETURN TO 1950...
THE TIME-MACHINE WELL HIDDEN, GEORGE MADE HIS WAY INTO THE CITY! FIRST HE STOPPED AT A PAWN SHOP...
I MUST GET SOME 1912 CURRENCY! I'LL HAVE TO PAWN A FEW THINGS...
THEN, THE STEAMSHIP OFFICE...
OF COURSE, SIR! ONE RESERVATION FOR THE MAIDEN VOYAGE OF THE S.S. TITANIC... SOUTHAMPTON TO NEW YORK!
MAY I LOOK AT YOUR PASSENGER LIST?
THE PURSER HANDED GEORGE A SHEET OF PAPER, AND HE SCANNED THE LIST OF NAMES...
AH... HERE IT IS! MR. AND MRS. JOHN SEYMORE, AND SON GEORGE!
THE EVENTFUL DAY IN APRIL, 1912 ARRIVED! AMID CHEERING AND GAYETY THE ILL-FATED TITANIC MOVED FROM ITS SOUTHAMPTON PIER ON ITS MAIDEN VOYAGE! AND ON BOARD WAS THE TIME-TRAVELER, GEORGE SEYMORE...
TVOOOOM BVOOOOP
CHUF
BAP
THE FIRST DAY OUT HE MET THEM! HIS PARENTS! HE SMILED TO HIMSELF! THEY WERE SO YOUNG... IN THEIR LATE TWENTIES! HE WAS FOURTY-FOUR... ALMOST OLD ENOUGH TO BE HIS FATHER'S FATHER...
I'M VERY PLEASED TO MEET YOU, MR. AND MRS. SEYMORE! I AM... MR... GEORGE TEMPORAL!
GEORGE... THAT'S MY LITTLE SON'S NAME! GEORGE! COME HERE!
THE YOUNGSTER SKIPPED TO HIS MOTHER'S SIDE! GEORGE WATCHED HIM! HE FELT A SUDDEN THRILL AS HE REALIZED THAT HE WAS LOOKING AT HIMSELF... AS A CHILD OF SIX! HE GRINNED AT THE BOY...
THIS IS MR. TEMPORAL, GEORGE! SAY 'HELLO'!
HULLO!
HOW DO YOU DO, GEORGE?
4


THE SEA WAS CALM AS THE TITANIC MOVED NORTH-WEST! AND ON BOARD, GEORGE SEYMORE WATCHED... AND WAITED...
MOMMY! WHY DOES THAT MAN WATCH US ALL THE TIME...
SH-H-H, GEORGE! HE'LL HEAR YOU!
SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER... AS THE LIGHTS OF THE SHIP REFLECTED FAR OUT OVER THE BLACK WATER...GEORGE STOOD ON THE DECK, WATCH IN HAND...
APRIL 15TH, 1912! TWO MORE HOURS TO GO! THEN...
HMS TITANIC
THE MINUTES DRAGGED BY! A FOG SET IN! THE SHIP MOVED THROUGH IT! THE SOUND OF THE DANCE ORCHESTRA IN THE BALLROOM DRIFTED ACROSS THE TOSSING SEA...
IT IS ALMOST TIME! I MUST GET TO THE WHEEL-HOUSE!
AS HE PASSED HIS PARENTS' CABIN, GEORGE GAZED THROUGH THE PORT-HOLE! HIS YOUNGER SELF SLEPT PEACEFULLY IN HIS BED...
SLEEP ON, LITTLE GEORGE! THIS TIME YOUR DREAMS WILL NOT BE INTERRUPTED!
CAUTIOUSLY, GEORGE CLIMBED THE COMPANIONWAY TO THE WHEEL-HOUSE! HE LOOKED IN! A LONE SAILOR STOOD AT THE WHEEL, SQUINTING THROUGH THE GREY MIST!
IF HE HOLDS THIS COURSE, THE SHIP WILL STRIKE THE ICEBERG! BUT IT'S NO USE GOING TO THE CAPTAIN... HE WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME!
GEORGE SLIPPED INTO THE WHEEL-HOUSE! THE SAILOR TURNED! HE NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT HIM! HE SLUMPED TO THE FLOOR! GEORGE SPUN THE WHEEL...FULL LEFT RUDDER...
YOU'RE SAFE NOW, TITANIC! IN A MINUTE, YOU WOULD HAVE HIT THE ICEBERG... BUT I... I SAVED YOU!
THE SHIP TURNED WITH THE SPIN OF THE WHEEL! IT MOVED THROUGH THE FOG ON ITS NEW COURSE! THEN...
HA-HA! I, GEORGE SEYMORE, HAVE COME BACK IN TIME TO... TO... NO! NO! NO!
5

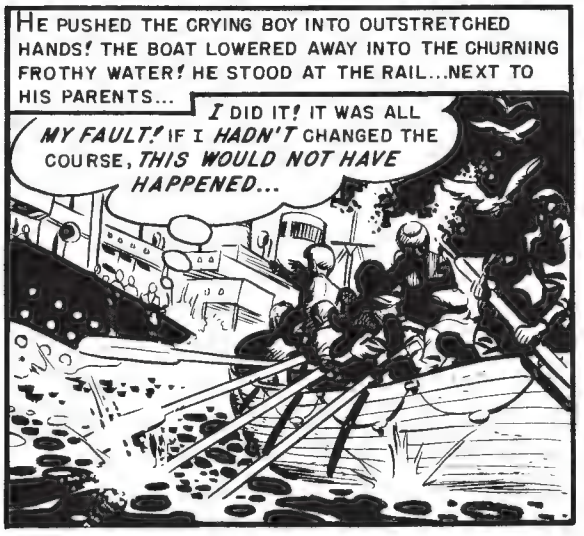
THE LURCH OF THE SHIP AS IT STRUCK THE ICEBERG SENT GEORGE FORWARD... HIS HEAD STRIKING THE WHEEL! HE SLIPPED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS! WHEN HE CAME TO, THE *TITANIC* WAS LISTING TO ONE SIDE...

AS HE STUMBLED DOWN THE COMPANIONWAY, GEORGE SAW THE CONFUSION... THE TERROR... THE HORROR HE REMEMBERED SO WELL...

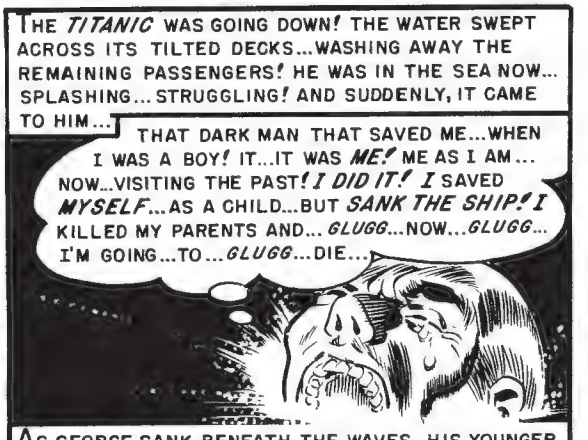
GEORGE PUSHED THROUGH THE MASS OF FRIGHTENED, HYSTERICAL HUMANITY! THEN HE CAUGHT SIGHT OF HIS PARENTS... HIS MOTHER CLUTCHING THE YOUNG BOY...

HE RUSHED TO HIS MOTHER'S SIDE! THE LIFE-BOAT WAS JAMMED WITH PEOPLE! HE SNATCHED THE CHILD... HIS YOUNGER SELF... FROM HER...

HE PUSHED THE CRYING BOY INTO OUTSTRETCHED HANDS! THE BOAT LOWERED AWAY INTO THE CHURNING FROTHY WATER! HE STOOD AT THE RAIL... NEXT TO HIS PARENTS...



THE *TITANIC* WAS GOING DOWN! THE WATER SWEPT ACROSS ITS TILTED DECKS... WASHING AWAY THE REMAINING PASSENGERS! HE WAS IN THE SEA NOW... SPLASHING... STRUGGLING! AND SUDDENLY, IT CAME TO HIM...


THAT DARK MAN THAT SAVED ME... WHEN I WAS A BOY! IT... IT WAS *ME!* ME AS I AM... NOW... VISITING THE PAST! *I DID IT!* I SAVED *MYSELF*... AS A CHILD... BUT *SANK THE SHIP!* I KILLED MY PARENTS AND... *GLUGG*... NOW... *GLUGG*... I'M GOING... TO... *GLUGG*... DIE...

AS GEORGE SANK BENEATH THE WAVES, HIS YOUNGER SELF... SAFE IN A LIFEBOAT... WATCHED! THE BOY WOULD REMEMBER... IT WAS A HORROR THAT HE WOULD REMEMBER *ALWAYS!*

6

RESCUED!
W. WOOD
WE HAD BEEN IN CONTINUOUS TOUCH WITH THEM SINCE THEIR SHIP HAD SHOT SKYWARD ALMOST A YEAR PREVIOUS! THEY HAD GONE TO EXAMINE A PLANET IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM OF A NEIGHBORING STAR! ONE OF OUR SCOUT-SHIPS HAD REPORTED THAT IT WAS ALMOST THE SAME SIZE AS EARTH AND HAD LOOKED PROMIS-ING...
WE'RE GOING TO ATTEMPT A LANDING! HERE GOES!
GOOD LUCK, YOU GUYS!
THE POPULATION PROBLEM IN THAT YEAR OF 1985 HAD GROWN TO SERIOUS PROPORTIONS! OUR ONLY SOLUTION WAS COLONIZATION OF ANOTHER PLANET! THE EARTH'S WORLD GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN CARRYING ON SPACE EXPLORATION FOR MANY YEARS! AT LAST WE WERE ON THE VERGE OF A SOLUTION...
WE'RE DOWN! EVERYTHING SEEMS OKAY! WE'RE GET-TING INTO OUR SPACE SUITS! PLENTY OF VEGETATION AROUND BUT NO SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE!
WHAT A THRILL IT MUST BE FOR THOSE GUYS! A STRANGE NEW PLANET...

THE OTHER PLANETS OF *OUR* SOLAR SYSTEM HAD ALREADY BEEN EXAMINED! MARS...VENUS...ALL OF THEM! THEY HAD PROVED HOPELESS! OUR ANSWER, WE WERE SURE, WAS ANOTHER SOLAR SYSTEM...

THE ATMOSPHERE HERE SEEMS PRETTY GOOD! I'M SURE WE'LL BE ABLE TO EXIST HERE WITHOUT SPACE-SUITS! WE'RE GETTING OUT NOW! I SEE...

HEY!

THAT WAS WHEN THEIR RADIO HAD GONE DEAD! THAT WAS THE LAST MESSAGE WE HAD RECEIVED FROM THEM...

GIVE 'EM TIME! PERHAPS A TUBE BLEW!

PERHAPS... ONLY...

WE HAD GIVEN THEM TIME! THREE MONTHS! BUT WE NEVER HEARD FROM THEM! THEN, THE GOVERNMENT HAD ASKED FOR VOLUNTEERS...FOR A RESCUE TEAM TO GO AFTER THEM! I, KEN ATKENSON, HAD VOLUNTEERED...

GOOD LUCK, GENTLEMEN!

THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT!

AND SO, A SECOND SHIP HAD TAKEN OFF! AND I WAS IN IT! NOW WE WERE SPEEDING SKYWARD...ON A TRIP THAT WOULD TAKE US A YEAR OR MORE...BOUND FOR A PLANET IN A SOLAR SYSTEM OF A NEIGHBORING STAR...

DO YOU THINK WE'LL FIND THEM, CAPTAIN? DO YOU THINK THEY'RE STILL ALIVE!

I DON'T KNOW, KEN! I DON'T KNOW!

OUR SHIP WAS POWERED BY A MAGNETIC-SPACE DRIVE-UNIT! IT WAS THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN SPACE TRAVEL...

HOW DOES IT WORK, CAPTAIN?

SIMPLE! EACH STAR, EACH PLANET EMITS MAGNETIC LINES OF FORCE! THESE VARY IN WAVE-LENGTH WITH THE SIZE AND DENSITY OF EACH ASTRAL BODY...

BY TUNING IN ON THE PARTICULAR WAVE-LENGTH OF OUR DESTINATION, WE ARE ABLE TO UTILIZE ITS MAGNETIC FORCE LINES TO POWER AND STEER OUR CRAFT! BY A SIMPLE AMPLIFICATION OF THIS MAGNETIC CURRENT, WE ARE ABLE TO TRAVEL FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF LIGHT!

IT WAS GOING TO TAKE US TWENTY MONTHS TO REACH THE PLANET! THAT MEANT THAT THE OCCUPANTS OF THE FIRST SHIP, IF THEY WERE STILL ALIVE, WOULD HAVE BEEN THERE FOR *TWO YEARS*...

WELL, IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG TRIP! CHESS, ANYONE?

AW, SHUT UP!

2.

THE MONTHS PASSED AND OUR DESTINATION GREW NEARER AND NEARER! THEN...ONE DAY...
THERE SHE IS... ON OUR TELE-SCREEN!
GREEN! IT'S A GREEN PLANET LIKE EARTH!
YES! THAT'S WHY THE SCOUT-SHIP REPORTED IT! IT LOOKS VERY MUCH LIKE EARTH TOO, EXCEPT FOR THE LAND FORMATIONS!
ENTERING OUTER ATMOSPHERE, CAPTAIN!
THE LINES OF FORCE GUIDED US STRAIGHT TOWARD THE PLANET'S SURFACE! WE SPED ACROSS ITS UNFAMILIAR TERRAIN...
VEGETATION...LAKES... RIVERS...MOUNTAINS! IT IS SO LIKE EARTH... AND YET...
YET...IT LOOKS... DIFFERENT!
SUDDENLY I SAW IT! STANDING IN A CLEARING...
LOOK, CAPTAIN! THE OTHER SHIP!
YOU'RE RIGHT, KEN! SWITCH ON ROCKET JETS! PREPARE FOR LANDING...
WE TURNED SLOWLY AND NOSED UP OVER ANOTHER CLEARING SOME DISTANCE FROM THE OTHER SPACE-SHIP! THEN WE SLIPPED, TAIL-END FIRST, TOWARD THE SURFACE OF THE STRANGE PLANET...SHORT ROCKET BURSTS SLOWING OUR DESCENT...
WE BUMPED TO A STOP! WE WERE DOWN! IN A MATTER OF MINUTES WE WOULD KNOW...
LET'S GET INTO SPACE-SUITS, JUST IN CASE!
GOOD IDEA!
WE ALL DRESSED IN OUR PLASTIC, TEMPERATURE-CONTROLLED SPACE SUITS! WE CLIMBED FROM THE SHIP...GUNS DRAWN...
WHAT THE...?
LOOK!
GOOD LORD!
3.

THEY CAME AT US! THEY BURST FROM THE VEGETATION SURROUNDING THE CLEARING AND RUSHED US! THEIR HOARSE SHRIEKING SENT A COLD SHUDDER DOWN MY SPINE...
MONSTERS...
ATTACKING!
LORD! HOW UGLY...
THEY WERE HUMANOID IN FORM, BUT THAT WAS WHERE THE RESEMBLANCE ENDED! THEIR EYES GLARED FROM BLACK HOLES IN SICKLY GREENISH HEADS! THEY WERE UNCLOTHED... THEIR BODIES, TOO, THAT SICKLY GREEN! THEIR SKIN, IF YOU COULD CALL IT SKIN, WAS PULPY... SHIMMERING... SLIMY! IT SEEMED TO BE COVERED WITH FINE STICKY WET HAIRS.
WE BLASTED THEM...
KILLED THEM ALL...
I WONDER IF THESE... MONSTERS... GOT THE OTHERS?
WE LEFT THE SICKENING CORPSES AND MADE OUR WAY IN THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF THE SPACE SHIP WE HAD SPOTTED FROM THE AIR...
ON YOUR GUARD, MEN! WE MAY RUN INTO MORE OF THOSE CREATURES!
WE CAME TO THE EDGE OF A CLEARING! THE SHIP WAS THERE, STANDING TALL AND STRAIGHT...
LOOK! IT'S ALL ROTTED... RUSTED... EATEN AWAY!
NO SIGNS OF LIFE!
WE MOVED CLOSER! THE SPACE SHIP... ITS SHINY METAL LONG SINCE TARNISHED TO A DULL GREY... STOOD LIKE A TOMBSTONE! HERE AND THERE, THE METAL WAS GONE... REVEALING THE ROTTED INTERIOR! WE WENT INSIDE...
THE WIRES... THE INSULATIONS... EVERYTHING... ROTTED!
AND EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE COVERED WITH THIS... THIS MOLD!
4.

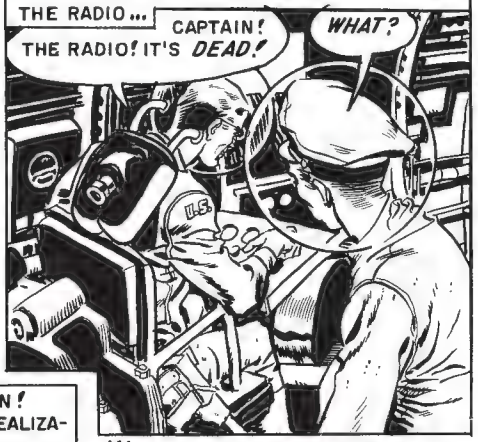
IT WAS *TRUE! MOLD COVERED EVERYTHING!* THE INSTRUMENTS... THE COTS... THE CHAIRS ... THE WIRING...

I'M AFRAID, GENTLEMEN, THAT THE FIRST EXPEDITION HAS BEEN WIPED OUT BY *THOSE MONSTERS...*
LET'S GO BACK TO OUR SHIP BEFORE *MORE* OF THEM SHOW UP!

WE MADE OUR WAY BACK TO OUR OWN SHIP, SKIRTING THE CLEARING TO AVOID THE CORPSES OF THOSE HORRIBLE CREATURES! WE CLIMBED IN THE OPEN DOOR...

WE'LL START BACK AT ONCE! RADIO EARTH, KEN! TELL THEM THE FIRST EXPEDITION WAS ANNIHILATED BY THE CREATURES THAT INHABIT THE PLANET AND THAT THE AIR IS CONTAMINATED WITH SPORES THAT COVER EVERYTHING WITH MOLD!
YES, SIR! AT ONCE!

I FLICKED THE SWITCHES TO TURN OUR TRANSMITTER ON! THERE WAS NO RESPONSE! THE RADIO...



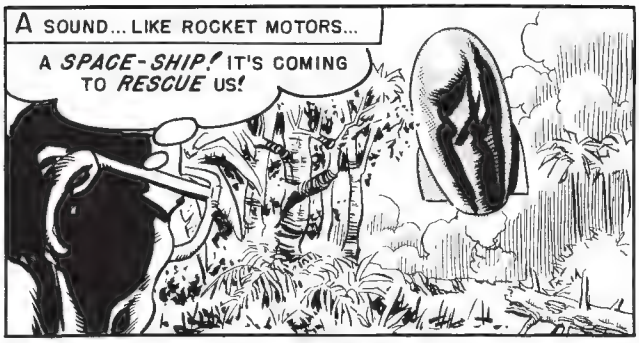
I LOOKED ABOUT! THE MOLD... THE GREY MOLD HAD STRIPPED THE WIRES OF THEIR INSULATION...

THE POWER WAS TURNED ON! NOTHING HAPPENED! THE REALIZATION CAME TO US...

WE BEGAN TO WORK FEVERISHLY! THE MOLD GREW FAST! IT ROTTED THE WIRES FASTER THAN WE COULD REPAIR THEM! WE WERE TRAPPED...

WE GAVE IT UP! WE WERE LICKED! THEN... A MORE GHASTLY THING BEGAN TO HAPPEN...
KEN! YOUR SPACE SUIT! IT'S ROTTING AWAY!
THE MOLD HAS GOTTEN TO THAT, TOO...
IN A MATTER OF WEEKS THE MOLD HAD COMPLETELY DEMOLISHED OUR SUITS! THE SHIP WAS COVERED WITH IT! BUT WE LIVED ON...
WE CAN EXIST WITHOUT OUR SUITS! THE ATMOSPHERE IS MUCH LIKE OURS ON EARTH!
BUT THE SPORES...THE MOLD! WE'RE BREATHING IT INTO OUR LUNGS!
WE LOOKED AT EACH OTHER! I WAS HORRIFIED! A SMALL PATCH OF GREEN HAD BEGUN TO APPEAR ON THE CAPTAIN'S FACE...
IT'S ATTACKED US, NOW!
LORD HELP US!
IT WAS A TERRIFYING ORDEAL! WE COULD SEE OURSELVES CHANGING EVERY DAY! THE MOLD BEGAN TO COVER OUR BODIES...
IT SEEMS TO BE LIVING ON OUR TISSUES!
AND IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY GROWING INTERNALLY AS WELL!
WE GREW MORE HORRIBLE AS THE WEEKS WENT BY...
HOW LONG DO YOU THINK IT WILL TAKE FOR US TO DIE, CAPTAIN?
NO TELLING, KEN! MONTHS, MAYBE!
BREATHING BECAME MORE DIFFICULT! OUR VOICES WERE GOING! WE SOUNDED HUSKY...WEAK! WE KEPT TALK TO A MINIMUM...
GENTLEMEN! I SUGGEST... COUGH...WE SPLIT UP...KEEP AWAY FROM EACH OTHER... SO WE CANNOT WATCH THE MOLD DESTROYING US...
YES! IT WOULD BE BEST!
I FOUND A SPOT ON A SMALL HILL! I COULD SEE OUR SPACE SHIP! THE SHINY METAL WAS NOW A DULL GREY... HOLES HERE AND THERE...
IT LOOKS LIKE THE OTHER ONE...THE FIRST SHIP...NOW!
6

THE MONTHS PASSED, BUT I DID NOT DIE! STRANGELY, MY APPETITE HAD INCREASED! IT SEEMED THAT I WAS FEEDING THE MOLD AS WELL AS MY OWN WRETCHED BODY! THEN ONE DAY, AS I SAT ON MY HILL... WAITING...WAITING...



I RUSHED DOWN THE HILL...CALLING FOR THE OTHERS! IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAD USED MY VOICE IN MONTHS! IT STARTLED ME! IT WAS HOARSE...UNINTELLIGIBLE...
G-Y-A-A-A-G-G-H-H-H!

AND THEN I SAW THE OTHERS! I HAD GOTTEN SO USED TO MYSELF THAT I HADN'T REALIZED HOW REVOLTING WE HAD BECOME! THEIR EYES GLOWED FROM BLACK SOCKETS...THEIR HEADS... SICKLY GREENISH...PULPY...SHIMMERING...SLIMY...

AS THE BULLETS RIPPED INTO ME...AND I PITCHED FORWARD, BLEEDING...EVERYTHING SUDDENLY BECAME BECAME CLEAR! I WAS A MONSTER...THE SAME KIND THAT HAD ATTACKED US WHEN WE LANDED! AS THE BLACKNESS CLOSED IN, I REALIZED THAT WE HAD KILLED THE MEMBERS OF THE FIRST EXPEDITION... JUST AS THE NEWCOMERS WERE...KILLING...US...

It was in the vast trackless desert wastes of the strange planet that they first met

the aliens!

THE SHIP STOOD IMPOSINGLY POINTING ITS BLUNT NOSE TOWARD THE GREY OVERCAST THAT HUNG LIKE A THICK BLANKET FROM HORIZON TO HORIZON! A THRONG HAD GATHERED TO WITNESS THE OCCASION... THE LAUNCHING OF THE FIRST ROCKET EVER TO ATTEMPT INTERPLANETARY TRAVEL...

THE MULTITUDE RETREATED TO A POSITION OF RELATIVE SAFETY, AND THE LAST OF THE CREW ENTERED THE SHIP...

THERE WAS A DEAFENING ROAR... AND A BURST OF FLAME ISSUED FROM THE TAIL OF THE GIGANTIC SPACE-SHIP..
HOLD ON! HERE WE GO!
THE SLEEK CRAFT SHUDDERED... THEN ROSE SLOWLY FROM ITS LAUNCHING PLATFORM... GATHERING SPEED...
SHIP..NOW ALOFT!
INCREASE POWER!
UP THROUGH THE GREY CLOUD BANK THE SPACE-SHIP HURTLED... THEN OUT INTO THE VELVETY BLACKNESS OF SPACE...
WE'RE ON OUR WAY!
INSIDE THE SHIP, ANXIOUS EYES SCANNED THE VIEW-SCREEN...
THERE IT IS... OUR DESTINATION!
I WONDER IF A CIVILIZATION DOES EXIST ON THE PLANET WE'RE ATTEMPTING TO REACH!
ACROSS THE VASTNESS OF SPACE, THE CRAFT AND ITS BRAVE CREW SPED... TOWARD THEIR OBJECTIVE! IT WAS THEIR NEAREST NEIGHBOR... A PLANET THEY HAD STUDIED THROUGH THEIR TELESCOPES FOR GENERATIONS...
...AND NOW! NOW WE WILL FIND OUT IF WHAT OUR SCIENTISTS HAVE TOLD US IS TRUE!
...THAT THERE IS LIFE THERE... AN INTELLIGENT LIFE-FORM...SIMILAR TO OURS!
THE TRIP TO THE NEARBY PLANET SEEMED ENDLESS! SOON, HOWEVER, THE SPACE-SHIP, TRAVELING AT INCREDIBLE SPEED, DREW NEAR ITS GOAL! AS IT PASSED CLOSE TO THE PLANET'S SATELLITE...
IT IS AS WE WERE TOLD! THERE IS NO LIFE ON THIS PLANET'S MOON!
BARREN.. COLD... COVERED WITH CRATERS AND EXTINCT VOLCANOS!
AND THEN, THEY ENTERED THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE STRANGE PLANET...
HEADING TOWARD TAN COLORED AREA ABOVE GREEN STRETCH...
PREPARE FOR LANDING! CREW... TAKE YOUR PLACES AT YOUR STATIONS!
2.

THEIR SPACE-SHIP DIPPED LOW OVER A BARREN SANDY TERRAIN...
HOW DRY AND ARID IT LOOKS!
NO SIGNS OF VEGETATION OR ANIMAL LIFE!
THE CRAFT CAME TO REST IN A VALLEY-LIKE FORMATION, SURROUNDED ON ALL SIDES BY HIGH DUNES OF WHITE SAND...
PERHAPS OUR SCIENTISTS WERE *WRONG!* PERHAPS THERE IS NO LIFE ON THE PLANET AFTER ALL!
WE WILL SEE! LATER, WE WILL EXPLORE THE GREEN AREAS! LET US DISEMBARK AND LOOK AROUND!
THE ATMOSPHERE OUTSIDE THE SHIP WAS TESTED AND FOUND TO BE CAPABLE OF SUSTAINING LIFE! CAUTIOUSLY, THEY CLIMBED FROM THE SHIP...
WE SEEM TO HAVE LANDED IN A DESERT AREA!
COME! LET US EXPLORE BEYOND THESE SAND DUNES!
THE INTERPLANETARY EXPLORERS CLIMBED TO THE CREST OF A SAND DUNE! BEFORE THEM, STRETCHING AS FAR AS THE EYE COULD SEE, WAS TRACKLESS WASTES OF SUN-PARCHED SAND...
NOTHING! NO SIGN OF LIFE!
STRANGE! OUR SCIENTISTS *ASSURED* US...
BEHIND THEM, DOWN IN THE VALLEY FORMATION, THEIR SHIP STOOD... SILENT... ALONE...
COME! LET US GO BACK! WE WILL TRY ANOTHER PART OF THE PLANET!
WAIT! LOOK!
FAR OUT ACROSS THE WHITE EXPANSE, A CLOUD OF DUST ROSE LAZILY... DRIFTING IN THE SOFT BREEZE THAT FANNED THEIR FACES.
SOMETHING MOVING... OUT THERE!
CREATURES! *LIFE!*
THEY WATCHED THE PUFF OF DUST CURL UPWARD... COMING TOWARD THEM... SLOWLY...
THEY MUST NOT SEE OUR SHIP! LET US GO FORTH AND MEET THEM!
YES! WE WILL SEE IF THEY ARE HOSTILE!
3

THE CLOUD OF DUST GREW LARGER AS THE EXPLORERS MOVED TOWARD IT! THEN, WHEN THEY WERE CLOSE ENOUGH, THEY SAW...

MEN...LIKE OURSELVES! LIFE IN OUR FORM!

THEN...OUR SCIENTISTS WERE CORRECT!

THE APPROACHING MEN STOPPED AT A SAFE DISTANCE... EYEING THE SPACE-TRAVELERS! AFTER AN AWKWARD MOMENT, ONE OF THEM STEPPED FORWARD! HE UTTERED SOMETHING IN A GARBLED TONGUE...

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, SIR?

HIS LANGUAGE, PROBABLY!

LET ME TRY, SIR! I'VE HAD TRAINING IN ALIEN SPEECH COMPREHENSION!

THE VOLUNTEER EXPLORER EDGED TOWARD THE STRANGER THAT HAD SPOKEN! HE STOOPED AND TRACED A CRUDE DRAWING OF A MAN IN THE SAND...

SEE? MAN! THIS...

GRODUH...EF GRODUH! MAHN?

IT WAS TEDIOUS! IT TOOK SEVERAL HOURS OF PATIENT TRIAL AND ERROR, BUT FINALLY THE TWO GROUPS WERE ABLE TO CONVERSE IN SIMPLE TERMS...

FROM...UP... THERE...IN... SKY...

YES...FROM ...FAR...AWAY...

YOU...FROM... HERE...

NO...YOU...FROM ...HERE...

THERE WERE MISUNDERSTANDINGS! THE SPACE EXPLORERS COULDN'T EXPLAIN TO THE OTHERS THAT THEY CAME FROM A NEIGHBORING PLANET...

LET'S SHOW THEM OUR SHIP, SIR!

NO! WE CANNOT RISK IT! THEY MIGHT DESTROY IT!

THE PRIMITIVE CONVERSATION BECAME MORE HEATED...

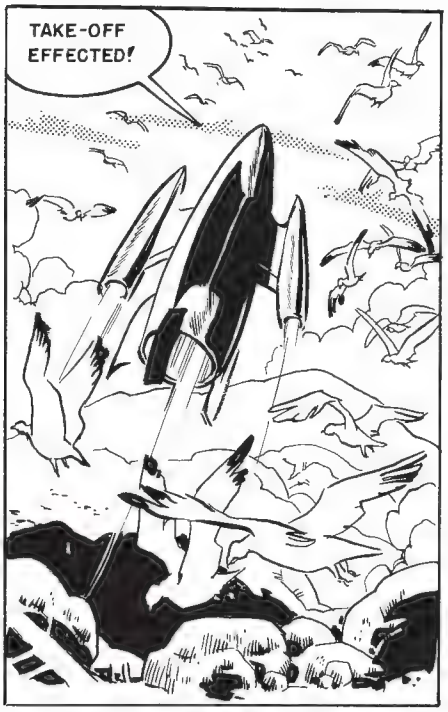
YOU...SHOULD...WELCOME...US...

WELCOME...US...

4

ONE OF THE SPACE EXPLORERS RAISED HIS ARM IN A GESTURE OF...
PEACE! WE...COME IN...PEACE!
PEEZ? YAH... NO GRODLUC!
THEY'RE BACKING AWAY, SIR!
WATCH IT! THEY'RE DRAWING WEAPONS!
NO! WAIT! PEACE! NO FIGHT!
FIAT! YAH! GRODLUC...
THE STRANGERS POINTED THEIR WEAPONS AT THE HORRIFIED SPACE-TRAVELERS AND FIRED! ONE OF THEM FELL... DEAD!
CRAZY IDIOTS! THEY'VE KILLED HONRUH!
LET THEM HAVE IT!
GRODLUC!
THE SILENCE OF THE DESERT WAS RIPPED BY THE CHATTER OF LETHAL WEAPONS...
WHEN THE SMOKE HAD CLEARED, BODIES OF BOTH GROUPS LAY STREWN ON THE HOT SAND! EACH SIDE WITHDREW BEYOND RANGE...
LET'S GET BACK TO OUR SHIP, SIR! THE NATIVES OF THIS PLANET ARE VIOLENT WAR-LIKE CREATURES!
YES! NOW IS OUR CHANCE! THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPT OUR PEACE GESTURE!
THE MEN THAT HAD TRAVELED ACROSS THE VASTNESS OF SPACE SCRAMBLED BACK TO THEIR SHIP! AS THEY REACHED THE CREST OF THE DUNES, ONE OF THEM LOOKED BACK...
LOOK! THEY'RE RUNNING, TOO! PROBABLY GOING FOR HELP! MAKE HASTE, MEN!
YES! WE MUST LEAVE HERE BEFORE THEY RETURN!
5

UP INTO THE SLEEK FORM OF THEIR SPACE-SHIP THE REMAINING EXPLORERS CLIMBED! HATCHES WERE SEALED...SWITCHES THROWN ...THEN...



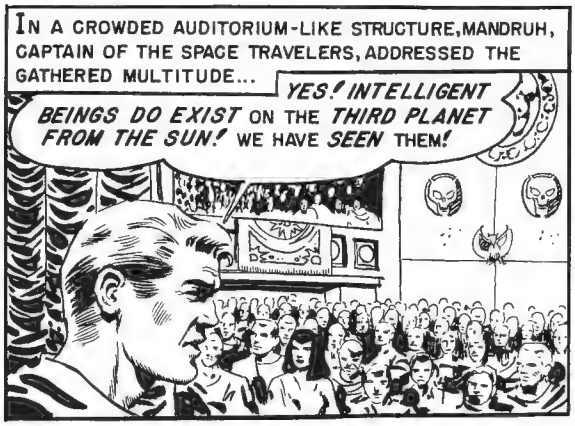
FAR OUT ON THE SANDY WASTES, A STRANGELY CLAD FIGURE ASTRIDE A STILL STRANGER ANIMAL STARED WIDE-EYED AT THE SILVERY OBJECT THAT SHOT SKYWARD BELCHING FLAME...

AND THEN, FURTHER WEST, ANOTHER OBJECT...DIFFERENT IN DESIGN...ROSE FROM THE WHITE EXPANSE...

INSIDE THE FIRST SHIP, THE SPACE TRAVELERS TOUCHED BUTTONS, TURNED DIALS, PULLED LEVERS...GUIDING THEIR SHIP HOME...

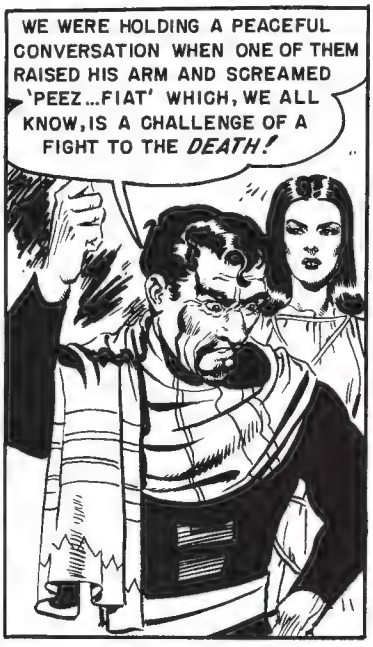
BACK THROUGH THE INKY BLACK SPACE THE SHIP SPED...BACK...

THE SPACE-SHIP SLIPPED THROUGH THE GREY MIST THAT SURROUNDED ITS NATIVE PLANET AND CAME TO REST ON THE FRIENDLY SURFACE...


IN A CROWDED AUDITORIUM-LIKE STRUCTURE, MANDRUH, CAPTAIN OF THE SPACE TRAVELERS, ADDRESSED THE GATHERED MULTITUDE...
YES! INTELLIGENT BEINGS DO EXIST ON THE THIRD PLANET FROM THE SUN! WE HAVE SEEN THEM!

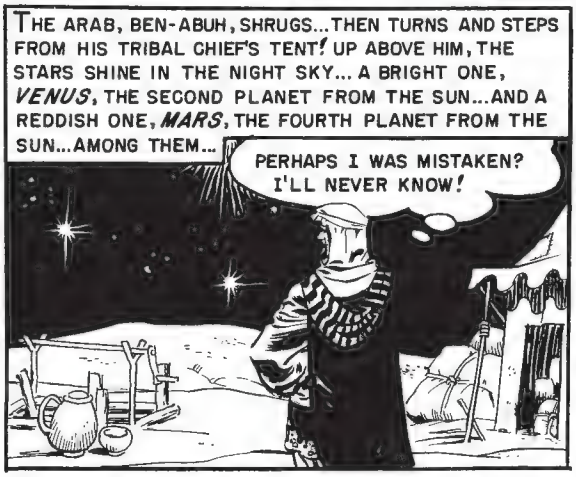
THEY ARE A WARLIKE RACE! THEY ATTACKED US FOR NO REASON! WE OF THE SECOND PLANET FROM THE SUN ARE NO LONGER SAFE! THEY WILL DESTROY US IF THEY HAVE A CHANCE! WE MUST NOT GIVE THEM THAT CHANCE! WE MUST DESTROY THEM FIRST!

MEANWHILE, A SIMILAR MEETING WAS BEING HELD ON ANOTHER PLANET...
YES! A CIVILIZATION DOES EXIST ON THE THIRD PLANET! WE SAW THE PEOPLE! THEY ARE WARLIKE!


WE WERE HOLDING A PEACEFUL CONVERSATION WHEN ONE OF THEM RAISED HIS ARM AND SCREAMED 'PEEZ...FIAT' WHICH, WE ALL KNOW, IS A CHALLENGE OF A FIGHT TO THE DEATH!

THEY WILL DESTROY US IF WE GIVE THEM A CHANCE! WE OF THE FOURTH PLANET FROM THE SUN MUST NOT GIVE THEM THAT CHANCE! WE MUST DESTROY THEM FIRST!

WHILE BACK ON EARTH, SOMEWHERE IN THE VAST WHITE STRETCH OF SAND THAT IS THE SAHARA DESERT, A FRIGHTENED ARAB GESTICULATES BEFORE HIS TRIBAL CHIEF...
...TWO SILVER MONSTERS...ROARING AND BELCHING FLAME! I SAW THEM! FIRST...ONE IN THE EAST! THEN, ONE IN THE WEST! BY ALLAH, I...
COME, COME, BEN-ABUH! A BIT TOO MUCH WINE, PERCHANCE?


THE ARAB, BEN-ABUH, SHRUGS...THEN TURNS AND STEPS FROM HIS TRIBAL CHIEF'S TENT! UP ABOVE HIM, THE STARS SHINE IN THE NIGHT SKY... A BRIGHT ONE, VENUS, THE SECOND PLANET FROM THE SUN...AND A REDDISH ONE, MARS, THE FOURTH PLANET FROM THE SUN...AMONG THEM...
PERHAPS I WAS MISTAKEN? I'LL NEVER KNOW!

FEAR NOT, BEN-ABUH! YOU'LL FIND OUT-- BEFORE VERY LONG!

THE END

BREAKDOWN!

THE ATTRACTIVE BLONDE GIRL NERVOUSLY TWISTED AND UNTWISTED HER HANDKERCHIEF AS SHE SAT IN THE OUTER OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION IN WASHINGTON! AT HER SIDE, A WIDE-EYED MAN SLUMPED IN A CHAIR... STARING BLANKLY AT THE FLOOR! FROM TIME TO TIME, HE WOULD UTTER UNINTELLIGIBLE WORDS...

MARY ROBERTS LED THE INCOHERENTLY BABBLING DONALD ROBERTS THROUGH THE DOOR MARKED 'PRIVATE' INTO A LUXURIOUSLY FURNISHED OFFICE! BEHIND AN IMPRESSIVE DESK SAT JOHN T. MOOR, CHIEF OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION...

MRS. ROBERTS EASED HER HUSBAND INTO A CHAIR AT THE SIDE OF MR. MOOR'S DESK...
NOW WHAT IS THIS FANTASTIC STORY YOU'VE TOLD MY SECRETARY... ABOUT AN INVASION OF MONSTERS FROM OUTER SPACE?
IT'S TRUE, MR. MOOR! EVERY WORD!
LOOK AT MY HUSBAND, MR. MOOR! HE'S MAD... STARK RAVING MAD! HE SAW ONE OF THE MONSTERS...
HMMM! SUPPOSE YOU TELL ME ABOUT IT, MRS. ROBERTS!
WELL, IT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT! I...
EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT, MRS. ROBERTS!
MISS JONES! PLEASE SEND IN MR. BOLES AND MR. ARNOLD!
TWO MEN ENTERED THE OFFICE OF THE F.B.I. CHIEF! THEY STUDIED MRS. ROBERTS AND HER WIDE-EYED HUSBAND...
THESE ARE MY ASSOCIATES, MRS. ROBERTS! I WANT THEM TO HEAR YOUR STORY! NOW, IF YOU'LL BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING...
YES, MR. MOOR! AS I SAID, IT STARTED EARLY LAST NIGHT...
"MY HUSBAND AND I OWN A SMALL FARM ABOUT SIXTY MILES FROM WASHINGTON! MY BROTHER LARRY WAS VISITING US FROM OUT OF TOWN LAST NIGHT, AND WE WERE ALL SITTING AROUND THE LIVING ROOM, WHEN..."
HEY! WHAT WAS THAT?
WHAT DID YOU SEE, LARRY?
YOU'RE WHITE AS A GHOST!
"LARRY RAN TO THE WINDOW AND STARED OUT INTO THE DARKNESS! MY HUSBAND AND I WENT TO HIS SIDE..."
WHAT WAS IT, LARRY?
SOMETHING... OUT THERE! IT CAME OUT OF THE SKY... A BALL OF FIRE! IT WENT DOWN BEHIND THE BARN!
A WHAT?
LIKE A GLOBE OF LIGHT... WITH A FLAMING TRAIL!
MUST HAVE BEEN A FALLING STAR YOU SAW, LARRY... A METEORITE!
2.

"DONALD AND I WENT BACK TO OUR CHAIRS, BUT LARRY STILL STOOD GAZING OUT OF THE WINDOW..."
IT COULD HAVE BEEN A METEORITE, DON... BUT I DOUBT IT!
WELL, IT'S GONE NOW, SO WHY DON'T YOU COME AND SIT DOWN!
"LARRY RELUCTANTLY LEFT THE WINDOW AND RETURNED TO HIS SEAT BY THE FIRE! SUDDENLY OUR DOG, SANDY, WHO HAD BEEN CURLED UP ON THE RUG ASLEEP, OPENED HIS EYES! HE LOOKED ABOUT... THEN BEGAN TO WHINE..."
S'MATTER BOY? WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU?
HE'S WHIMPERING! MAYBE HE'S SICK, DONALD!
MAYBE HE SENSES WHAT IT WAS THAT CAME OUT OF THE SKY, JUST NOW!
OH, LARRY! STOP IT! YOU'RE LETTING YOUR IMAGINATION RUN AWAY WITH YOU!
AM I? YOU DIDN'T SEE IT! I DID!
WHAT WAS THAT?
"SUDDENLY SANDY'S WHINING STOPPED! HE GOT UP... BACKING AWAY FROM THE FRONT DOOR! THE HAIRS ON HIS NECK BRISTLED... HIS FANGS WERE BARED..."
SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE COMIN' UP THE PATH!
LOOK AT THE DOG, MARY! LOOK!
GRR
"THEN THERE WAS A KNOCK! SANDY DARTED BEHIND A SOFA! DONALD ROSE HESITANTLY, WENT TO THE DOOR, AND OPENED IT..."
YES?
I WONDER IF I COULD USE YOUR PHONE! MY CAR'S STUCK DOWN THE ROAD AND I'D LIKE TO CALL A MECHANIC!
"HE CAME IN! HE WAS TALL... WELL BUILT... IN HIS THIRTIES, I SHOULD SAY! HE LOOKED QUICKLY ABOUT THE ROOM! SANDY BEGAN TO SNARL UNDER THE COUCH! THE STRANGER STEPPED BACK, ALARMED..."
OH, DON'T BE FRIGHTENED! HE WON'T HARM YOU! HE'S JUST WARY OF STRANGERS! QUIET, SANDY!
THE PHONE'S OVER THERE...
TH-THANK YOU!
GRR
"I REACHED UNDER THE SOFA TO SOOTHE SANDY, AND HE NIPPED MY HAND! IT WAS THE FIRST TIME HE HAD EVER BITTEN ME! THE STRANGER WAS ON THE PHONE TALKING IN A LOW VOICE! I GOT DOWN ON MY KNEES AND DRAGGED SANDY FROM BENEATH THE COUCH..."
SANDY! WHAT'S GOT INTO YOU? YOU BIT ME! C'MON, BOY... C'MON...
GRRRRRRR

"I HELD SANDY IN MY ARMS! HE WAS TREMBLING! THE STRANGER FINISHED HIS PHONE CALL, HUNG UP AND TURNED TOWARDS US! SANDY LEAPED FROM MY HOLD AND RAN YELPING FROM THE ROOM..."
YI...YI...YI...
SANDY! COME BACK!
I...I'M SORRY! I DO THINK YOUR DOG IS FRIGHTENED OF ME!
"WHILE DONALD APOLOGIZED FOR SANDY'S STRANGE BEHAVIOR... AND LARRY EYED THE STRANGER SUSPICIOUSLY... I WENT INTO THE NEXT ROOM HUNTING FOR THE DOG! I FOUND HIM, SPRAWLED ON THE FLOOR IN THE KITCHEN... DEAD..."
HIS EYES... BULGING FROM THEIR SOCKETS... AS IF HE HAD SEEN SOMETHING... SOMETHING FRIGHTENING! SOMETHING HORRIBLE ENOUGH TO KILL HIM!
"I WENT BACK INTO THE LIVING ROOM TO TELL DONALD WHAT HAD HAPPENED! WHEN I ENTERED, DONALD ANNOUNCED..."
MARY! MR. TRANCE IS STAYING THE NIGHT! HIS CAR BROKE DOWN AND THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO GET HERE TILL MORNING!
I... I'LL GET HIS ROOM READY, DONALD!
"AS I LEFT TO GO UPSTAIRS, I MOTIONED LARRY, MY BROTHER, TO FOLLOW! HE EXCUSED HIMSELF AND CAME AFTER ME..."
WHAT'S UP, MARY?
SANDY'S DEAD! THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THAT STRANGER... I...
DO YOU SENSE IT, TOO, MARY? I... I DON'T BELIEVE HIS STORY! I THINK HE'S GOT SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT FLAMING GLOBE I SAW!
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, LARRY! WE'LL FIND OUT.. LATER!
"LATER... AS WE ALL SAT AT THE TABLE HAVING COFFEE. I HAPPENED TO GLANCE UP AT THE MIRROR BEHIND MR. TRANCE, THE STRANGER! HE WAS FACING ME, WITH LARRY ON MY RIGHT AND DONALD TO MY LEFT! I SAW DONALD AND LARRY AND MYSELF ALL RIGHT... BUT MR. TRANCE'S IMAGE WAS NOT IN THE MIRROR! MR. TRANCE DIDN'T CAST ANY REFLECTION! I CAUGHT LARRY'S EYE AND NODDED TO THE MIRROR! HE SAW IT TOO..."
"SOON, MR. TRANCE ROSE FROM HIS CHAIR! HE STARTED TOWARD THE STAIRS..."
WELL, I THINK I'LL GO TO BED! GOOD-NIGHT FOLKS!
GOOD-NIGHT, MR. TRANCE.
'NIGHT!
4

"AS SOON AS I HEARD MR. TRANCE CLOSE HIS BEDROOM DOOR, I RUSHED TO DONALD! LARRY WAS AT MY SIDE..."
DONALD! SANDY'S DEAD! FRIGHTENED TO DEATH BY THAT... MAN!
AND HE DIDN'T CAST A REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR!
WHAT ARE YOU TWO TALKING ABOUT?
C'MON, MARY! I'M GOING DOWN TO THE ROAD AND LOOK FOR THAT GUY'S CAR! IF I DON'T FIND IT, I'LL KNOW SOMETHING'S FISHY!
YOU GO, LARRY! I'LL WAIT HERE WITH DONALD!
OKAY! BE BACK SOON!
"LARRY LEFT AND I BEGAN TO TREMBLE IN DONALD'S ARMS! HE CHIDED ME...TOLD ME I WAS ACTING SILLY..."
BUT LARRY LOOKED IN THE MIRROR TOO! WE BOTH COULDN'T BE WRONG!
WHY NOT? POWER OF SUGGESTION... FEAR! AND SANDY WAS AN OLD DOG, DEAR! HIS HEART COULD HAVE FAILED HIM!
"BUT DONALD DIDN'T SOUND CONVINCING! I KNEW HE WAS WORRIED! WHEN LARRY RETURNED..."
WELL?
NO CAR! NOT A SIGN OF ONE UP AND DOWN THE ROAD FOR A MILE! THEN I WENT OUT IN THE FIELD... BEHIND THE BARN! SOMETHING HAPPENED OUT THERE! SOMETHING STRANGE! ALL THE CORN'S BURNED AWAY IN A FIFTY FOOT CIRCLE! GROUND'S SCORCHED!
"THEN, WE DECIDED TO DO SOME INVESTIGATING..."
HE MUST BE ASLEEP BY NOW, DONALD! WE CAN SEARCH HIS CLOTHES... FIND OUT WHO HE IS!
LOOK! YOU TWO ARE ALL KEYED UP! YOU'RE LIABLE TO MAKE NOISE! I'LL GO ALONE. STAY HERE...
"DONALD WENT UPSTAIRS AND WE HEARD HIM OPEN THE DOOR TO MR. TRANCE'S ROOM! SUDDENLY MY BLOOD FROZE IN MY VEINS AS THE HOUSE WAS FILLED WITH THE MOST HYSTERICAL HORRIFIED SHRIEK I HAVE EVER HEARD..."
DONALD!
WHAT THE...?
EEEE YAAA
5

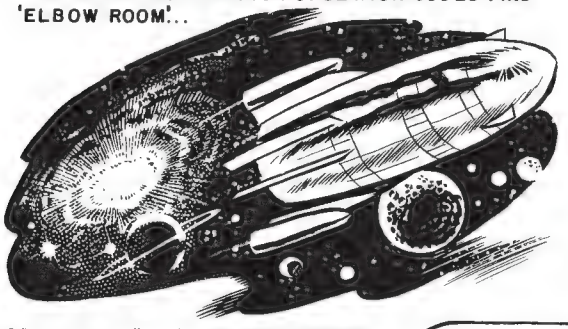
"DONALD CAME HALF-FALLING, HALF-STUMBLING DOWN THE STAIRS! HIS FACE WAS CHALK WHITE... HIS EYES, ROUND AND BULGING... HE WAS CHATTERING LIKE AN IDIOT..."
MONSTER...GLUG-G-H... HORRIBLE... A-A-G-H... HORRIBLE...
WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE?
"IT WAS MR. TRANCE! HE CAME OUT OF HIS ROOM AND SLOWLY DESCENDED THE STAIRS! DONALD SAT ON THE BOTTOM STEP, CRYING LIKE A FRIGHTENED CHILD..."
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO HIM?
HE...HE JUST CAME OUT OF YOUR ROOM! WHAT DID HE SEE? TELL ME...TELL ME?
HE SAW ME...AS I REALLY LOOK! A THING SO HORRIBLE BY YOUR STANDARDS THAT NO HUMAN CAN GAZE UPON IT WITHOUT GOING OUT OF HIS MIND... WITHOUT GOING STARK, STARING MAD!
WHO...WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?
I AM FROM OUTER SPACE! I HAVE COME TO JOIN OTHERS OF MY RACE WHO HAVE COME HERE BEFORE ME! BY MEANS OF TELEPATHIC HYPNOTISM, I CONTROL YOUR MINDS SO THAT YOU THINK YOU ARE SEEING A HUMAN BEING! BUT WHEN I AM ASLEEP, THIS HYPNOTIC SCREEN THAT COVERS THE UGLY MONSTER I ACTUALLY AM, FALLS! YOUR HUSBAND SAW ME UNPROTECTED! HE COULDN'T STAND IT!
"MR. TRANCE WENT ON TALKING... BRAGGING. SUDDENLY, LARRY INTERRUPTED..."
MARY! TURN AROUND! DON'T LOOK AT HIM! I'VE GOT A GUN!
DON'T BE A FOOL! YOU WON'T EVEN BE ABLE TO SHOOT IF YOU SEE ME...
"I TURNED AWAY FROM MR. TRANCE! LARRY SCREAMED AT ME..."
GET OUT, MARY! TAKE DONALD WITH YOU! GET OUT, AND DON'T LOOK BACK... NO MATTER WHAT...
LARRY! YOU'RE NOT ACTING SMART! DO YOU WANT TO LOSE YOUR MIND? DO YOU...
"I HAD STARTED TOWARD THE DOOR, LEADING MY BABBLING HUSBAND BY THE HAND, WHEN THE SHOT RANG OUT! LARRY HAD FIRED BEFORE MR. TRANCE COULD DO ANYTHING! I HEARD A BODY SLUMP TO THE FLOOR..."
DON'T LOOK BACK, MARY! HE'S... HE'S... CHANGING... HE... HE...
AAAAAAAAAH!
6.

"I SUPPOSE THAT WHEN MR. TRANCE DIED, HIS HYPNOTIC SPELL OVER LARRY WORE OFF! AS I DROVE AWAY IN THE STATION WAGON, I COULD HEAR LARRY'S HYSTERICAL SHRIEKING, AS HE GAZED UPON THE REAL MR. TRANCE..."
YAHHHH!
...AND SO I CAME DIRECTLY TO YOU! NOW YOU KNOW MY STORY!
DID YOU SAY THIS... MR. TRANCE MENTIONED OTHERS COMING BEFORE HIM, MRS. ROBERTS?
WHY, YES! HE MENTIONED THAT THEY WERE ALL IN HIGH PLACES IN GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, AND SCIENCE... WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME TO TAKE OVER!
TOO BAD! AND SHE'S SO PRETTY!
I BEG YOUR PARDON!
SWEET YOUNG THINGS LIKE THIS ONE ALMOST MAKE YOU WISH YOU WERE HUMAN, DON'T THEY, ARNOLD?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
YOU KNOW TOO MUCH, MRS. ROBERTS! YOUR HUSBAND, HERE, IS HARMLESS! BUT YOU... YOU WILL HAVE TO BE SILENCED.. BY BEING DRIVEN OUT OF YOUR MIND!
AS MRS. ROBERTS WATCHED HORRIFIED, THE THREE MEN BEFORE HER DROPPED THEIR HYPNOTIC SCREENS, AND SHE GAZED UPON THREE MONSTERS... THE SAME KIND THAT HER BROTHER LARRY AND HER HUSBAND DONALD HAD SEEN...*
* An accurate illustration of the monsters in this story is, naturally, impossible... as we feel it is preferable to preserve the sanity both of the artist and of you, our readers!
...AND AS HER SHRIEKING AND AGONIZING SCREAMS FILLED THE ROOM, ONE OF THEM SWITCHED ON THE INTERCOM...
MISS JONES! WILL YOU PLEASE PHONE FOR AN AMBULANCE? MRS. ROBERTS HAS HAD A.... NERVOUS BREAKDOWN!
THE END

THE PROBERS
CAPTAIN SCOTT MOVED FORWARD THROUGH THE HUGE ROCKET SHIP CURSING THE CLUMSINESS OF THE HEAVY MAGNETIZED SHOES HE WAS OBLIGED TO WEAR! HE PAINFULLY MADE HIS WAY TO A DOOR MARKED 'LABORATORY'..
DRAKE!
AH! CAPTAIN SCOTT! WELCOME TO MY LITTLE WORKSHOP!
HELLO, DRAKE! JUST THOUGHT I'D DROP IN AND PAY YOU A LITTLE VISIT! THEY DON'T NEED ME UP AT CONTROL...THE AUTOMATIC GYRO'S TAKEN OVER!
CAPTAIN SCOTT, COMMANDER OF ROCKET SHIP 405X, LOOKED ABOUT HIM! THE ROOM HE WAS IN WAS A SMALL COMPACT LABORATORY, FULLY EQUIPPED! HE NODDED TO A ROW OF CAGES LINING ONE WALL...
HOPE YOUR LITTLE CHARGES WEREN'T AFFECTED IN THE TAKE OFF, DRAKE!
I WAS JUST PREPARING MY INSTRUMENTS FOR A CHECK...
W. WOOD
1

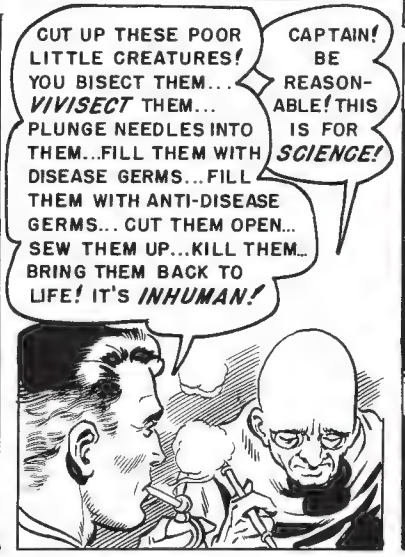
GORDON DRAKE, BIOLOGIST ASSIGNED TO 405X, REACHED INTO ONE OF THE CASES AND BROUGHT FORTH A SQUEALING BALL OF FUR...
HE LOOKS ALL RIGHT!
YES! WELL! IN A MOMENT I'LL SEE WHETHER HE'S BEEN DAMAGED INTERNALLY...
DRAKE PICKED UP A GLEAMING SCALPEL...
YES, CAPTAIN...
COUGH...ER... I'VE GOT TO BE GOING BACK, DRAKE! SEE YOU AT CHOW!
CAPTAIN SCOTT THUMPED OUT OF THE LABORATORY AND SLAMMED THE DOOR...
CAPTAIN! CAPTAIN!
BLASTED BIO GUYS! ALWAYS CUTTING UP THOSE POOR CREATURES!
CAPTAIN SCOTT TURNED TO SEE LAWRENCE CAVIPS, GEOLOGIST ASSIGNED TO 405X, STARING WIDE-EYED AT A SHAPELESS BLACK MASS HANGING IN AIR BEFORE HIM...
LOOK, CAPTAIN! I POURED MYSELF A CUP OF COFFEE FROM THIS THERMOS... AND LOOK WHAT HAPPENED!
OF COURSE, LARRY! THERE'S NO GRAVITY OUT HERE! YOU CAN'T 'POUR' THINGS! IT HANGS THERE BECAUSE THE SHIP... AND EVERYTHING IN IT... ARE IN FREE FALL...
THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO WEAR THESE MAGNETIC SHOES! OTHERWISE, WE'D FLOAT AROUND IN HERE JUST LIKE THAT BLOB OF COFFEE! HERE! I'LL SHOW YOU A TRICK! GOT A DRINKING STRAW?
I THINK SO! YES! HERE'S ONE!
CAPTAIN SCOTT STUCK THE STRAW INTO THE FLOATING BLACK LIQUID AND SIPPED IT UP...
THERE! NOW, DON'T PULL ANYTHING LIKE THAT AGAIN! THIS IS YOUR FIRST MISSION, I TAKE IT?
RIGHT! I JUST GRADUATED TWO MONTHS AGO!
WELL! YOU'LL GET USED TO IT! AND YOU'LL GET PLENTY OF ROCKS FOR YOUR COLLECTION, TOO! THIS IS THE FOURTH 'COLONY EVALUATION' TRIP I'VE COMMANDED! DIDN'T FIND ANYTHING THE FIRST THREE TIMES! BUT THIS TIME I HAVE A HUNCH!
I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, CAPTAIN! THE POPULATION PROBLEM'S GETTING PRETTY BAD, BACK ON EARTH!
2

AND SO, THE 'COLONY EVALUATION' EXPEDITION ROCKET-SHIP 405X STREAKED THROUGH SPACE IN FREE FALL! THE CRAFT PASSED OUT OF THE FAMILIAR SOLAR SYSTEM...WITH ITS PLANETS LONG SINCE INVESTIGATED AND DISCARDED...AND ON TOWARD THE DISTANT STARS, HOPEFULLY SEARCHING FOR ANOTHER PLANET SIMILAR TO EARTH... A PLANET WHERE EARTH'S TEAMING POPULATION COULD FIND 'ELBOW ROOM'...

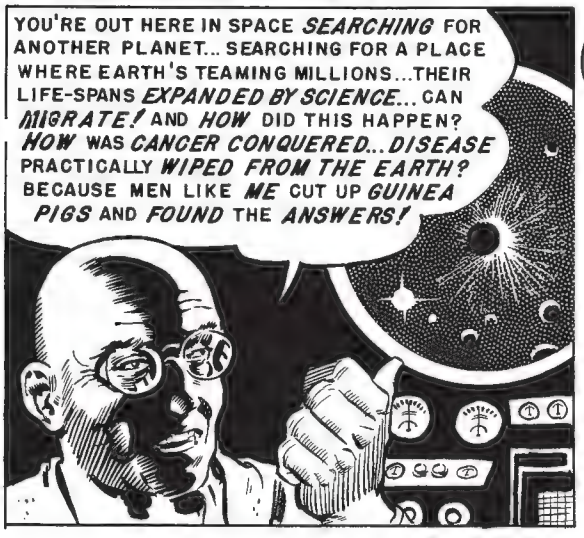


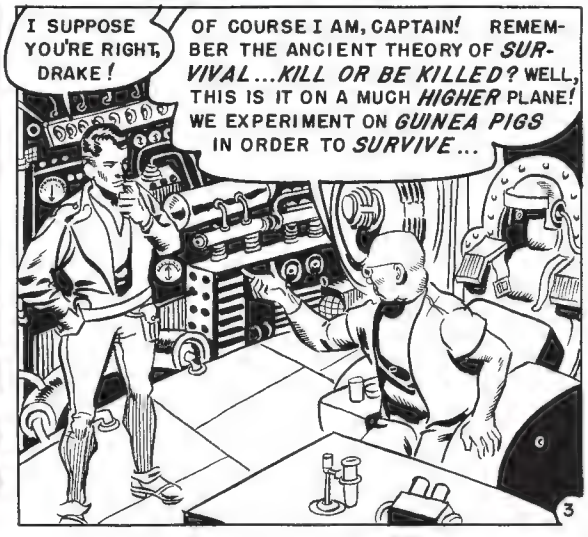
ONE DAY, ABOUT TWO MONTHS AFTER TAKE-OFF...

CAPTAIN SCOTT'S GLANCE SWEPT ACROSS THE LABORATORY! IN A JAR, A SKINNED GUINEA PIG, WHITE AND PULPY, FLOATED LAZILY! PARTS OF ANOTHER WERE STUFFED INTO A BOTTLE OF FORMALDEHYDE HAPHAZARDLY! A THIRD SQUEALED FROM ITS CAGE AS IF IN PAIN...


CUT UP THESE POOR LITTLE CREATURES! YOU BISECT THEM... VIVISECT THEM... PLUNGE NEEDLES INTO THEM...FILL THEM WITH DISEASE GERMS...FILL THEM WITH ANTI-DISEASE GERMS... CUT THEM OPEN... SEW THEM UP...KILL THEM... BRING THEM BACK TO LIFE! IT'S INHUMAN!
CAPTAIN! BE REASONABLE! THIS IS FOR SCIENCE!

SCIENCE, BAH!
YOU SCOFF, CAPTAIN? HERE IN THIS SHIP, A MILLION MILES FROM EARTH, YOU SCOFF? WHY DON'T YOU ASK YOURSELF WHY YOU'RE HERE... WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

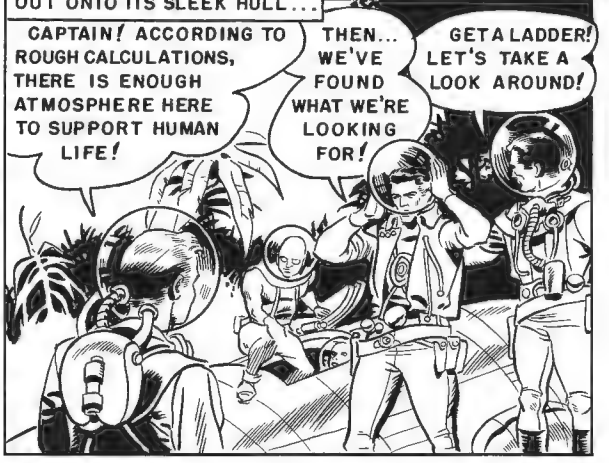

YOU'RE OUT HERE IN SPACE SEARCHING FOR ANOTHER PLANET... SEARCHING FOR A PLACE WHERE EARTH'S TEAMING MILLIONS...THEIR LIFE-SPANS EXPANDED BY SCIENCE... CAN MIGRATE! AND HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? HOW WAS CANCER CONQUERED...DISEASE PRACTICALLY WIPED FROM THE EARTH? BECAUSE MEN LIKE ME CUT UP GUINEA PIGS AND FOUND THE ANSWERS!


I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, DRAKE!
OF COURSE I AM, CAPTAIN! REMEMBER THE ANCIENT THEORY OF SURVIVAL...KILL OR BE KILLED? WELL, THIS IS IT ON A MUCH HIGHER PLANE! WE EXPERIMENT ON GUINEA PIGS IN ORDER TO SURVIVE...
3

ABOUT SIX MONTHS OUT, THE SHIP ENTERED A STRANGE, UNCHARTED SOLAR SYSTEM! SUDDENLY...
CAPTAIN! CAPTAIN! COME TO CONTROL...URGENT...CONTROL... URGENT!
CAPTAIN SCOTT MOVED...AS FAST AS HIS MAGNETIC SHOES WOULD PERMIT...TOWARD THE CONTROL ROOM...
WHAT'S WRONG, LAWSON?
AUTOMATIC GYRO'S ON THE FRITZ, SIR! SHIP'S IN A TURN...
CAPTAIN SCOTT STUDIED THE ROWS OF DIALS BEFORE HIM...
STRANGE! RADAR-SCOPE SHOWS US TO BE TOO FAR FROM ANY PLANET TO BE AFFECTED BY ITS GRAVITATIONAL FIELD!
SHIP HAS TURNED 45 DEGREES...
FRANTICALLY, THE MANUAL GYRO CONTROLS WERE SET! THE SWITCH WAS THROWN...
CAN'T SEEM TO BRING HER BACK ON COURSE!
SOMETHING SEEMS TO BE PULLING US...
EVEN PRECIOUS FUEL WAS WASTED IN AN ATTEMPT TO FORCE THE SHIP ON COURSE AGAIN, BUT TO NO AVAIL...
LOOK, CAPTAIN! ON THE TELEVIEW! WE SEEM TO BE HEADED TOWARD THAT PLANET...
WITH A GRAVITATIONAL PULL LIKE THAT, WE'LL BE SUCKED DOWN AND SMASHED TO BITS! WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SLOW OUR FALL IF WE CAN'T SWING THE SHIP AROUND...
FASTER AND FASTER THE SHIP WAS PULLED TOWARD THE SURFACE OF THE STRANGE PLANET! THEN...AS A CRASH BECAME MORE AND MORE INEVITABLE...ITS FALL WAS SUDDENLY HALTED! IT HOVERED ABOVE THE UNFRIENDLY LANDSCAPE...
NOW THE PLANET SEEMS TO BE REPELLING US!
IT'S STOPPED OUR FALL!
NO! WE'RE GOING DOWN AGAIN!
GENTLY, THE SHIP DESCENDED UNTIL IT BUMPED TO REST ON THE WEIRD TERRAIN! IT LAY GROTESQUELY ON ITS SIDE LIKE A FALLEN IDOL...
BLAST IT! HOW ARE WE EVER GOING TO GET OFF THIS PLACE IN THIS POSITION?
LET'S GET OUT AND TAKE A LOOK AROUND!
4

INSIDE THE SHIP, THE CREW STRUGGLED ABOUT, DONNING THEIR SPACE SUITS! SINCE THE SHIP LAY ON ITS SIDE, MOVEMENT WAS DIFFICULT...

THE DOOR TO THE GLEAMING SILVER SPACE-CRAFT SWUNG OPEN, AND THE OCCUPANTS OF THE SHIP CLAMBERED OUT ONTO ITS SLEEK HULL...


CAPTAIN! ACCORDING TO ROUGH CALCULATIONS, THERE IS ENOUGH ATMOSPHERE HERE TO SUPPORT HUMAN LIFE!
THEN... WE'VE FOUND WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR!
GET A LADDER! LET'S TAKE A LOOK AROUND!

THE MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION REMOVED THEIR PLASTIC HELMETS CAUTIOUSLY! THE GEOLOGIST WAS RIGHT! THE AIR WAS MUCH LIKE EARTH'S! THEY MOVED ABOUT CAREFULLY... EXPLORING...

HEY, DRAKE! WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THESE PLANTS?
A HIGH FORM... FAR MORE DEVELOPED THAN THOSE ON EARTH! THE BASIC STRUCTURE IS THE SAME THOUGH...

AFTER A FEW HOURS, THE CREW RETURNED TO THE SPOT WHERE THEY HAD LEFT THE SHIP...

AS NIGHT DREW ON, THE SMALL BAND OF SPACE EXPLORERS GATHERED AROUND A FIRE TO SLEEP...

BUT WHEN MORNING CAME...

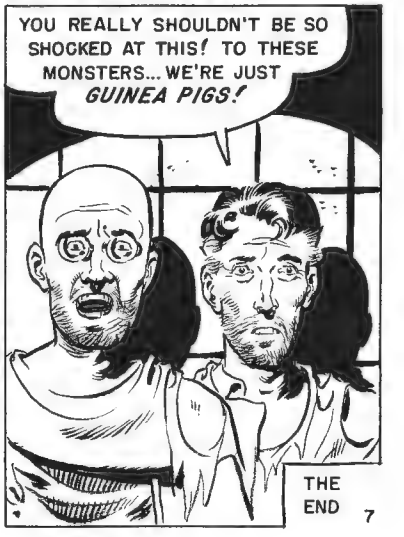
THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION STRUCK OUT ACROSS THE OPEN SPOT WHERE THEY HAD CAMPED IN SEARCH OF THEIR MISSING COMRADE! SUDDENLY...
WHAT IS IT, LARRY?
I... I'VE HIT A KIND OF INVISIBLE WALL!
HE'S RIGHT! I FEEL IT TOO!
THE GROUP MOVED ALONG THE INVISIBLE BARRIER...
IT SEEMS TO GO IN A TREMENDOUS CIRCLE!
WE'RE FENCED IN!
IT'S LIKE A FORCE FIELD! I CAN'T EVEN PUSH THIS STICK THROUGH IT!
WHEN NIGHT FELL AGAIN...
WE'VE TRIED ALL DAY TO FIND AN OPENING IN THIS INVISIBLE WALL WITHOUT SUCCESS!
WHO...OR WHAT...DO YOU SUPPOSE IS HOLDING US PRISONER?
WE'D BETTER POST A WATCH TONIGHT!
OKAY, CAPTAIN! I'LL TAKE IT!
BUT IN THE MORNING...
LAWSON'S GONE, TOO!
LORD...WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THEM? THEY JUST DISAPPEAR INTO THIN AIR!
THE NEXT NIGHT LARRY CAVIPS, THE GEOLOGIST, VANISHED!
WELL, DRAKE! THERE'S JUST THE TWO OF US, NOW!
FIVE MEN! VANISHED INTO THIN AIR! WHAT'LL WE DO, CAPTAIN? WHAT'LL WE DO?
NOTHING WE CAN DO! WE'RE UP AGAINST SOMETHING WE CAN'T FIGHT! OBVIOUSLY IT, OR THEY, ARE FAR SUPERIOR TO US, MENTALLY! HOW THEY PULLED OUR SHIP FROM THE SKY STILL AMAZES ME! AND THAT INVISIBLE WALL...
GOOD LORD! LOOK!
6

CAPTAIN SCOTT FOLLOWED DRAKE'S TERRIFIED GAZE! ACROSS THE OPEN SPOT TWO INDESCRIBABLY HORRIBLE MONSTERS MOVED SLOWLY TOWARD THEM...

THE MONSTERS EACH CAUGHT ONE OF THE STRUGGLING EARTHMEN IN THEIR SLIMY TENTACLES...

AFTER WHAT SEEMED AN ETERNITY, THE VILE CREATURES THAT CARRIED THE SQUIRMING EARTHMEN CAME UPON A STRANGE STRUCTURE! A BLOOD-CURDLING SIGHT MET THE EYES OF THE TWO HUMANS AS THEY ENTERED...

CAPTAIN SCOTT AND GORDON DRAKE WERE THROWN INTO THE STRANGE TYPE CAGES WHERE, AFTER A WHILE, THEY WITNESSED...



7

THE ENEMIES OF THE COLONY

THE *G.C.A.* (GALACTIC COLONIZATION AUTHORITY) ROCKET-SHIP R-2 BUMPED GENTLY TO REST ON THE FRIENDLY SURFACE OF THE STRANGE PLANET! AS THE DUST AND ROCKET-FUEL EXHAUST DRIFTED AWAY, A TINY PORT IN THE MONSTROUS GLEAMING HULL SLID OPEN...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! THE PLANET WE HAVE TRAVELED SEVEN YEARS TO REACH! OUR *NEW HOME*...

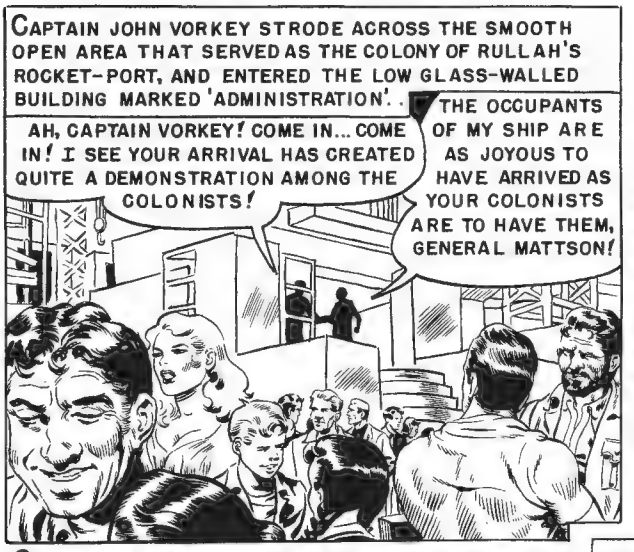
A BUTTON WAS PRESSED, AND SOMEWHERE INSIDE THE SHIP A MOTOR STARTED! A SLIT APPEARED IN THE SIDE OF THE GIGANTIC CRAFT AND A LADDER PROJECTED ITSELF! EAGER FEET SCURRIED DOWN! LAUGHING CHILDREN... SMILING WOMEN... GRIM-FACED MEN...

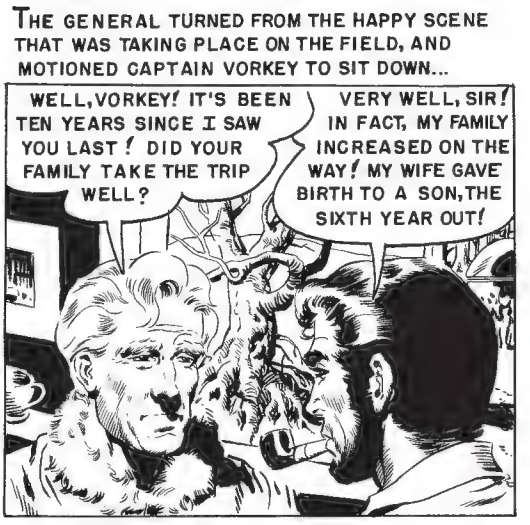
WELCOME! WELCOME TO RULLAH! WELCOME... ONE AND ALL!

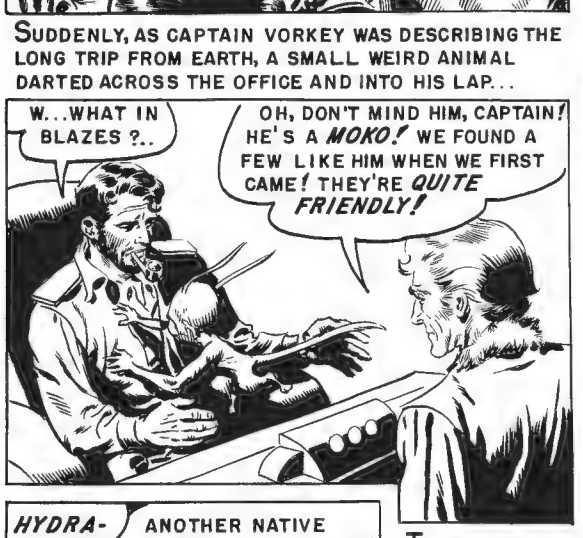
THE GATHERED MULTITUDE THAT HAD COME TO MEET THE NEW ARRIVERS THRONGED ABOUT THEM... SHOUTING... JOKING! OLD FRIENDS MET! CHILDREN WHO HAD SPENT THEIR WHOLE LIVES IN THE SPACE-SHIP STARED ABOUT... WIDE-EYED...

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! CAPTAIN VORKEY... PLEASE COME TO ADMINISTRATION OFFICE! CAPTAIN VORKEY...

1


CAPTAIN JOHN VORKEY STRODE ACROSS THE SMOOTH OPEN AREA THAT SERVED AS THE COLONY OF RULLAH'S ROCKET-PORT, AND ENTERED THE LOW GLASS-WALLED BUILDING MARKED 'ADMINISTRATION'..
AH, CAPTAIN VORKEY! COME IN... COME IN! I SEE YOUR ARRIVAL HAS CREATED QUITE A DEMONSTRATION AMONG THE COLONISTS!
THE OCCUPANTS OF MY SHIP ARE AS JOYOUS TO HAVE ARRIVED AS YOUR COLONISTS ARE TO HAVE THEM, GENERAL MATTSON!

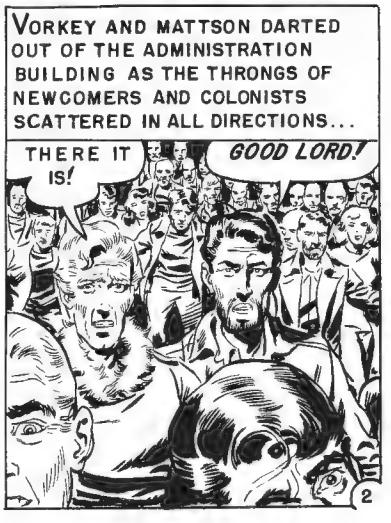

THE GENERAL TURNED FROM THE HAPPY SCENE THAT WAS TAKING PLACE ON THE FIELD, AND MOTIONED CAPTAIN VORKEY TO SIT DOWN...
WELL, VORKEY! IT'S BEEN TEN YEARS SINCE I SAW YOU LAST! DID YOUR FAMILY TAKE THE TRIP WELL?
VERY WELL, SIR! IN FACT, MY FAMILY INCREASED ON THE WAY! MY WIFE GAVE BIRTH TO A SON, THE SIXTH YEAR OUT!


SUDDENLY, AS CAPTAIN VORKEY WAS DESCRIBING THE LONG TRIP FROM EARTH, A SMALL WEIRD ANIMAL DARTED ACROSS THE OFFICE AND INTO HIS LAP...
W...WHAT IN BLAZES ?..
OH, DON'T MIND HIM, CAPTAIN! HE'S A MOKO! WE FOUND A FEW LIKE HIM WHEN WE FIRST CAME! THEY'RE QUITE FRIENDLY!

BUT...
OH, YOU'LL GET USED TO THEIR LOOKS, VORKEY! WE'VE DOMESTICATED THE LITTLE CREATURES... MADE PETS OUT OF THEM! POOR THINGS... THEY WERE ALMOST EXTINCT WHEN WE CAME! THOSE BLASTED HYDRA-FILES WERE KILLING THEM OFF...

HYDRA-FILES? WHAT ARE THEY?
ANOTHER NATIVE CREATURE OF RULLAH! VERY VICIOUS... OUR WORST ENEMY! THEY ATTACK...

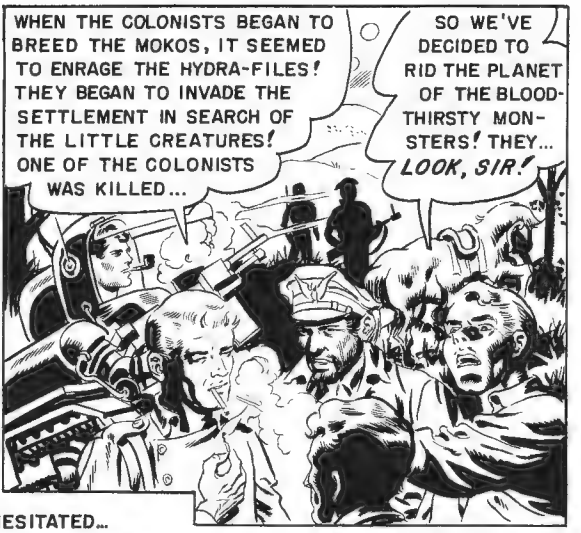
THE SCREAM OF A SIREN CUT GENERAL MATTSON OFF ABRUPTLY.
WHAT'S THAT FOR?
C'MON! NOW YOU'LL GET TO SEE ONE OF OUR HYDRA-FILE FRIENDS!
WEEEEE


VORKEY AND MATTSON DARTED OUT OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AS THE THRONGS OF NEWCOMERS AND COLONISTS SCATTERED IN ALL DIRECTIONS...
THERE IT IS!
GOOD LORD!
2

THE HIDEOUS MONSTER SLITHERED ACROSS THE FIELD TOWARD A SMALL CHILD WHOSE MOTHER HAD FORGOTTEN HIM IN HER TERROR! HE STOOD ROOTED TO THE SPOT CLUTCHING HIS PRECIOUS PET MOKO TO HIS TINY CHEST...
IT'S HEADED FOR THAT KID!
LET'S GO!
THE CHILD SCREAMED! HIS MOKO SQUIRMED FROM HIS ARMS AND DARTED AWAY...
GOOD SHOT, VORKEY!
KA-BLAM!
CRACK
THE BLAST OF THE HYDROGEN DISINTEGRATOR STOPPED THE HYDRA-FILE IN ITS TRACKS, AND IT TOPPLED OVER...DEAD...
ARE THERE MANY OF THESE THINGS ON RULLAH, GENERAL?
NOT TOO MANY, NOW!
WE'VE BEEN KILLING THEM OFF, LITTLE BY LITTLE! SAY, THERE'S A HUNTING PARTY GOING OUT TOMORROW! CARE TO GO ALONG?
I'D ENJOY THAT, GENERAL!
THAT NIGHT, AS CAPTAIN VORKEY AND HIS FAMILY UNPACKED IN THEIR NEW HOME...
LOOK, DADDY! LOOK WHAT I HAVE!
WELL! A MOKO! WHERE DID YOU GET IT, JIMMY?
HARVEY MATTSON, THE GENERAL'S SON, GAVE IT TO ME! HE HAS TWENTY-THREE OF THEM! HE'S BREEDING THEM!
AFFECTIONATE LITTLE CREATURES, AREN'T THEY?
JIMMY! TAKE THAT HORRIBLE THING OUT OF THIS HOUSE, IMMEDIATELY!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, CORA! MOKOS ARE HARMLESS! THE COLONISTS KEEP THEM AS PETS!
3

THE NEXT MORNING, CAPTAIN VORKEY JOINED THE PARTY THAT WAS SETTING FORTH TO HUNT HYDRA-FILES. AS THEY MADE THEIR WAY OVER THE STRANGE TERRAIN...

IT SEEMS THAT THE HYDRA-FILES HAD ALMOST COMPLETELY WIPED OUT THE MOKOS BEFORE WE CAME!
POOR THINGS! YOUR BOY GAVE ONE TO MY OLDEST SON YESTERDAY! HE LOVES IT!

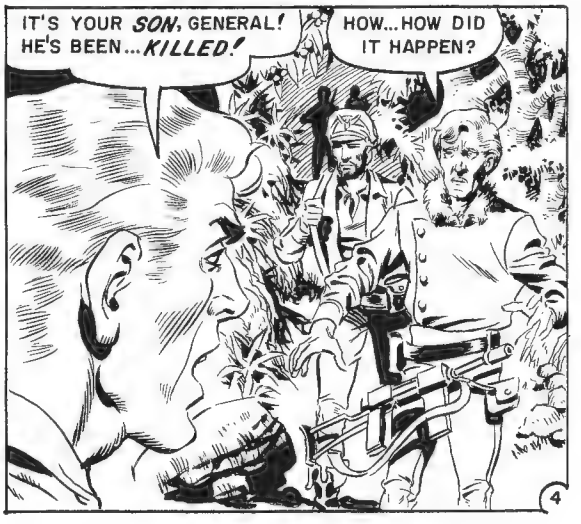

WHEN THE COLONISTS BEGAN TO BREED THE MOKOS, IT SEEMED TO ENRAGE THE HYDRA-FILES! THEY BEGAN TO INVADE THE SETTLEMENT IN SEARCH OF THE LITTLE CREATURES! ONE OF THE COLONISTS WAS KILLED...
SO WE'VE DECIDED TO RID THE PLANET OF THE BLOOD-THIRSTY MONSTERS! THEY...
LOOK, SIR!

THE MEMBERS OF THE HUNTING PARTY FROZE IN THEIR TRACKS! A HYDRA-FILE, FEASTING ON A MOKO, BARRED THEIR WAY...

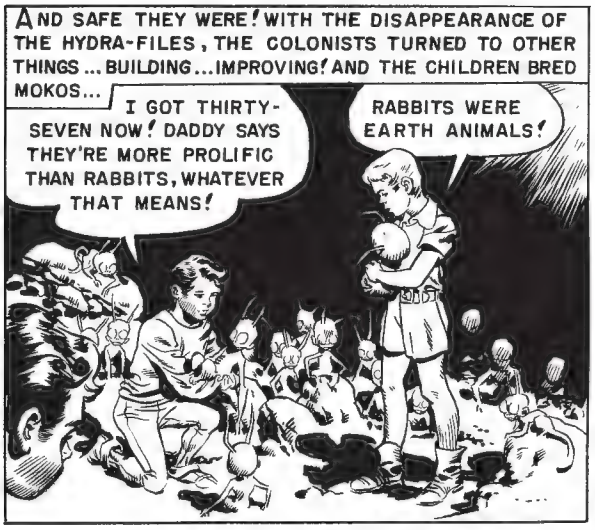
THE HYDRA-FILE HESITATED... DROPPED THE MOKO IT HAD BEEN DEVOURING...AND STARTED TO RETREAT...

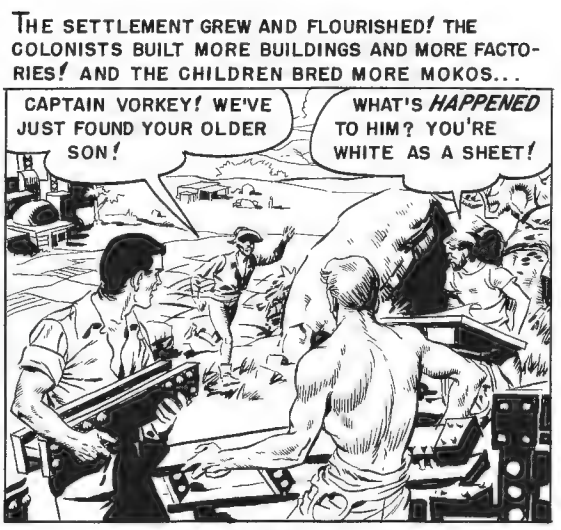
THE HYDROGEN BLASTER EXPLODED THE HIDEOUS MONSTER TO SMITHEREENS...

DURING THE REST OF THE HUNTING EXPEDITION, THE COLONISTS TRACKED DOWN AND KILLED FOUR MORE HYDRA-FILES BEFORE THEY RETURNED TO THE SETTLEMENT...



WE DON'T KNOW! WE FOUND HIM... OR WHAT WAS LEFT OF HIM...
THE HYDRA-FILES! THEY DID THIS! HARVEY WAS BREEDING MOKOS! HE HAD OVER TWENTY! THE HYDRA-FILES MUST HAVE ATTACKED HIM...
GENERAL MATTSON RETURNED TO HIS HOME TO COMFORT HIS MOURNING WIFE...
LOOK, WALTER! LOOK AT HARVEY'S MOKOS! THEY SENSE SOMETHING! SEE HOW THEY'VE GATHERED AROUND HIS BED?
THEY'RE GRIEVING FOR HIM, DEAR! THEY LOVED HIM SO...
WE'LL HAVE TO GIVE THEM AWAY, NOW!
NO! I'LL KEEP THEM! I'LL TAKE CARE OF THEM! THEY'RE ALL I HAVE... NOW...
GENERAL MATTSON CLENCHED HIS FISTS...
I'LL WIPE THEM OUT! I'LL WIPE OUT EVERY ROTTEN HYDRA-FILE ON THIS WHOLE STINKING PLANET...
THE WAR WAS ON..
THAT'S NUMBER TEN FOR TODAY...
EEEEE
BRAM!
THERE'S ONE!
GET HIM! GET HIM!
SOON, THE HYDRA-FILES THAT INHABITED THE PLANET RULLAH ALL BUT DISAPPEARED! THOSE THAT HAD NOT BEEN KILLED HAD MIGRATED FAR INTO THE UNEXPLORED SECTIONS...
NOT A SIGN OF A HYDRA-FILE FOR FOUR HUNDRED MILES AROUND!
I THINK WE'VE RID OURSELVES OF THEM FOR THE PRESENT! NOW OUR SETTLEMENT IS SAFE!
5


AND SAFE THEY WERE! WITH THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE HYDRA-FILES, THE COLONISTS TURNED TO OTHER THINGS... BUILDING... IMPROVING! AND THE CHILDREN BRED MOKOS...
I GOT THIRTY-SEVEN NOW! DADDY SAYS THEY'RE MORE PROLIFIC THAN RABBITS, WHATEVER THAT MEANS!
RABBITS WERE EARTH ANIMALS!


THE SETTLEMENT GREW AND FLOURISHED! THE COLONISTS BUILT MORE BUILDINGS AND MORE FACTORIES! AND THE CHILDREN BRED MORE MOKOS...
CAPTAIN VORKEY! WE'VE JUST FOUND YOUR OLDER SON!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM? YOU'RE WHITE AS A SHEET!

THEY TOOK CAPTAIN VORKEY TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE SETTLEMENT...
HE... HE'S BEEN TORN TO SHREDS...
THE HYDRA-FILES... THEY'VE COME BACK!

HUNTING PARTIES WERE FORMED AGAIN... AND THEY WENT FORTH...
NO SIGN OF THEM!
THEN THEY'RE HIDING SOMEWHERE..

ANOTHER COLONIST WAS FOUND... ANOTHER VICTIM...
IT'S HORRIBLE!
LOOK! LOOK HOW HIS POOR LITTLE MOKOS GRIEVE OVER HIS REMAINS..

WHILE A HUNTING PARTY SCOURED THE COUNTRYSIDE...
IT'S NO USE! THERE'S NO SIGN OF A HYDRA-FILE ANYWHERE!
COME! LET'S RETURN! I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY FAMILY!

AS THE GROUP MADE ITS WAY BACK TO THE SETTLEMENT...
LISTEN!
WHAT WAS THAT!
SOUNDED LIKE A SCREAM!
AAAAGH
6

THE HUNTING PARTY RUSHED TO THE SPOT FROM WHERE THE SCREAM HAD COME...

FIFTY OR SIXTY SQUEALING MOKOS WERE SAVAGELY ATTACKING A STRUGGLING, SCREAMING COLONIST...

AFTER THE SMOKE OF THE HYDROGEN BLASTERS CLEARED...

...THEY GANG UP ON A VICTIM AND DEVOUR HIM!
THEN THE HYDRA-FILES WERE ACTUALLY PROTECTING THEMSELVES BY KEEPING THE POPULATION OF THE MOKOS DOWN!

AS THE HUNTING PARTY NEARED THE SETTLEMENT, A TERRIFYING DIN REACHED THEIR EARS...THE SQUEALING OF *HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS* OF *HUNGRY MOKOS*... AND THE ANGUISHED CRIES OF DYING COLONISTS...

THE SQUEALING WAS COMING CLOSER NOW! A STAMPEDING MASS OF COUNTLESS MOKOS BORE DOWN UPON THE RETURNING HUNTERS! THE HYDROGEN BLASTERS WERE USELESS! THERE WERE FAR TOO MANY TO STOP..

ON MAN'S FIRST ATTEMPT TO REACH VENUS, HE ENCOUNTERED.....

THE GRAY CLOUD OF DEATH!
LOOK!
THERE IT IS!
WOOD
IN RESPONSE TO THE AGITATED SQUAWKING ON THE INTERCOM, CAPTAIN LARKIN MOVED THROUGH THE EQUIPMENT-LINED CORRIDOR OF THE 'VENUS-2' TOWARD RADAR-VIEW...
ALL RIGHT... ALL RIGHT! WHAT'S THE YELLING ABOUT?
SEE FOR YOURSELF, CAPTAIN! THERE..
XPRV2

CAPTAIN LARKIN TURNED TOWARD THE RADAR-VIEW SCREEN AND GASPED...
GOOD LORD! IT'S THE FIRST SHIP...THE SHIP THAT EARTH LOST CONTACT WITH! THE VENUS-1!
WE THOUGHT THEY'D CRASHED ON VENUS...
ATTENTION, GYRO-CONTROL! SWING SHIP AROUND! PREPARE FOR STOPPING...
RIGHT! GYRO-CONTROL...NOW SWINGING SHIP...
CAPTAIN LARKIN'S ROCKET SHIP WAS TURNED, AS IT HURTLED THROUGH SPACE IN FREE-FALL, UNTIL IT WAS SPEEDING STERN FIRST...
SHIP COMPLETELY TURNED, CAPTAIN! ROCKET TUBES NOW POINTED IN DIRECTION OF FLIGHT...
FIRE ROCKETS!
A BLAST FROM THE ROCKET TUBES SLOWED THE VENUS-2...
FIRE ROCKETS AGAIN...
A SUCCESSION OF ROCKET BLASTS FINALLY BROUGHT THE SPACE-SHIP TO A STOP...
WHAT NOW, CAPTAIN?
GET INTO YOUR SPACE SUITS! WE'RE GOING TO INVESTIGATE THE VENUS-1!
SOON, A PORT IN THE SIDE OF THE GLEAMING VENUS-2 OPENED AND TINY FIGURES CLAD IN SPACE SUITS EMERGED...
THE VENUS-1 MUST BE TWO MILES AWAY, CAPTAIN!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT! JUST PUSH OFF HARD! YOU'LL DRIFT TO HER! USE YOUR ROCKET BLASTERS IN CASE YOU GO OFF COURSE!
AND SO, CAPTAIN LARKIN AND THE OTHERS FROM THE VENUS-2 DRIFTED SLOWLY ACROSS THE BLACK VOID OF SPACE THAT SEPARATED THE TWO SHIPS...
I FIGURE WE'RE JUST OUTSIDE THE GRAVITATIONAL FIELD OF VENUS, CAPTAIN...
LOOK AT HER OUT THERE... COVERED WITH CLOUDS! I WONDER WHAT LIES BELOW THAT LAYER?
2

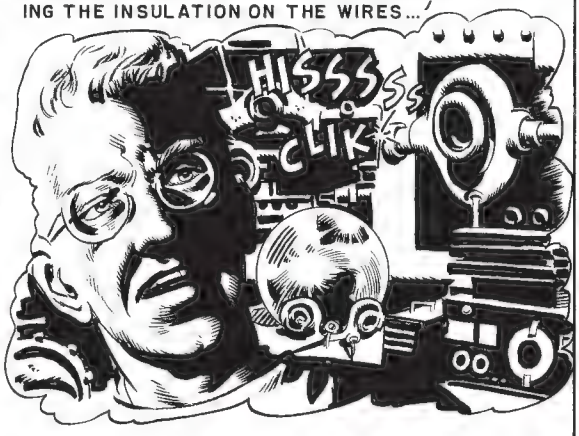
FINALLY, ONE BY ONE, THE SPACE TRAVELERS LANDED ON THE VENUS-I...
HEY! FELLOWS! I'M DRIFTING BY! HELP!
FIRE YOUR ROCKET BLASTER... AWAY FROM US... QUICKLY...
THE HELPLESS DRIFTING CREW MEMBER POINTED HIS ROCKET BLASTER...A SMALL PISTOL-TYPE WEAPON...IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM WHERE HE WANTED TO GO, AND FIRED IT AGAIN AND AGAIN...
SEE! YOU'RE COMING IN FINE, NOW!
HEY! THIS IS PRETTY GOOD! FOR A MINUTE, I THOUGHT I WAS A GONER...
AFTER THE LAST OF THE CREW WAS SAFELY ASTRIDE THE SILENT VENUS-I, CAPTAIN LARKIN MOTIONED THEM TO FOLLOW HIM, AND HE MOVED ACROSS THE HUGE HULL TO THE PORT...
LOOK! IT'S OPEN...
THE RUBBER-SEAL-EDGING IS GONE! THAT MEANS THE AIRLOCK IS USELESS!
CAPTAIN LARKIN SWUNG OPEN THE INNER DOOR OF THE USELESS AIRLOCK AND STEPPED INSIDE! THE OTHERS FOLLOWED! A HORRIFYING SCENE OF DEATH AND UTTER DESTRUCTION MET THEIR EYES...
RUINED! EVERYTHING RUINED!
LOOK, CAPTAIN! SKELETONS!
MORE HERE...STRIPPED OF CLOTHES AND FLESH!
ONE OF THE INVESTIGATORS FROM THE VENUS-2 KICKED A WHITENED SKULL AND...
IT...IT FELL INTO DUST! JUST A WHITE DUST...
WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED?
THE INSULATION'S GONE FROM ALL THE WIRING...
LEATHER'S STRIPPED FROM THE SEATS...
THE PLASTIC CRYSTALS FROM THE INSTRUMENT PANELS...
IT SEEMS AS THOUGH EVERYTHING THAT WAS ONCE ORGANIC MATERIAL HAS BEEN... REMOVED... OR...
CAPTAIN! COME QUICKLY!
3

SEE? IN THIS METAL TANK! ANOTHER BODY!
BUT THIS ONE ISN'T LIKE THE OTHERS! IT'S PRESERVED!
HE SEEMS TO HAVE STARVED TO DEATH! LOOK! HE'S CLUTCHING A PENCIL IN HIS RIGHT HAND...
...AND IN HIS LEFT... A NOTE-BOOK!
IT'S A DIARY! IT TELLS WHAT HAPPENED...
READ IT, CAPTAIN! START AT THE BEGINNING!
ALL RIGHT! HERE GOES! THE FIRST PAGE STARTS... 'A WARNING... TO WHOEVER FINDS THIS SHIP AND THIS DIARY! LEAVE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!'
'WE WERE APPROACHING THE GRAVITATIONAL FIELD OF VENUS... THE MYSTERIOUS CLOUD-COVERED PLANET... WHEN I SPOTTED A THIN LINE OF THE STUFF MOVING TOWARD THE SHIP...'
LOOK, SIR! WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT?
SEEMS TO BE A CLOUD FORMATION...
OUT HERE? WHERE THERE'S NO ATMOSPHERE? IT'S IMPOSSIBLE...
LOOK AT IT NOW! IT SEEMS TO BE GATHERING UP AND EXPANDING...
IT'S SURROUNDING THE SHIP! THE SCREEN'S JUST A FLAT GRAY! WE'RE STOPPING! THE STUFF IS STOPPING US!
LISTEN! DO YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
'YES! I HEARD IT! STRANGE SCRATCHING AND HAMMERING SOUNDS CAME FROM THE WALLS OF THE SHIP...'
IT'S THAT STUFF! THAT CLOUD! IT'S ALIVE!
DON'T BE FOOLISH! IT....
THE CLOUD! IT'S SLIPPING IN THE OUTER DOOR OF THE AIR-LOCK!
4

'A THIN WISP OF THE GRAY STUFF WAS DRIFTING IN UNDER THE OUTER AIRLOCK DOOR...'
THE DOOR'S BUSTED! IT ISN'T CLOSED TIGHTLY!
NO! IT'S ALWAYS SLIGHTLY OPEN WHEN NO AIR IS IN THE LOCK!
IT'S TRYING TO GET IN THROUGH THE INNER DOOR!
IT'S EATING AWAY THE RUBBER SEAL-STRIP!
'SOMETHING MADE ME RUN! I WAS FRIGHTENED! I HEARD AN OMINOUS HISSING SOUND AS I DARTED DOWN THE CORRIDOR TO THE ATMOSPHERIC-ADJUSTMENT TANK...'
THIS TANK IS ALL METAL! I'LL HIDE IN HERE...

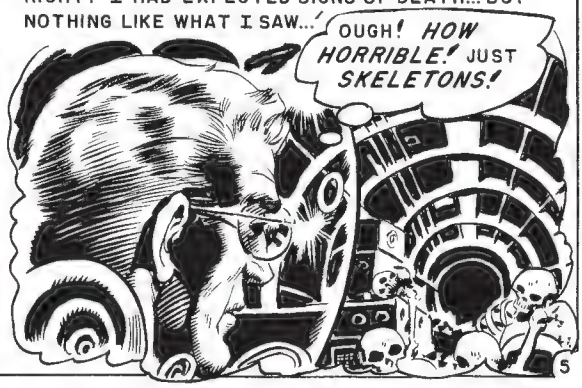
'I JUMPED INTO THE TANK AND SLAMMED THE METAL DOOR CLOSED! I TURNED ON THE INTER-COM AND LISTENED! THE SHIP WAS IN CONFUSION! I HEARD BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS OF PAIN! THE STUFF WAS ATTACKING THE MEN...'

'SOON THERE WERE NO MORE SCREAMS! JUST THE HISSING OF THE HORRIBLE GRAY CLOUD! THEN THE INTER-COM WENT DEAD! THE STUFF WAS ATTACKING THE INSULATION ON THE WIRES...'



'I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I REMAINED IN THE ATMOSPHERIC-ADJUSTMENT TANK AFTER THE LIGHTS WENT OUT! I JUST LAY THERE IN THE DARKNESS... LISTENING AS THE HISSING GRAY STUFF STRIPPED EVERYTHING ORGANIC FROM THE SHIP...'

'IT MUST HAVE BEEN SIX HOURS LATER WHEN I HEARD THE STUFF LEAVE THE SHIP! I FIGURED I'D BETTER DON A SPACE-SUIT BEFORE OPENING THE TANK DOOR SINCE THE GRAY CLOUD HAD PROBABLY RUINED THE PRESSURE CONTROL! I WAS RIGHT! I HAD EXPECTED SIGNS OF DEATH... BUT NOTHING LIKE WHAT I SAW...'



'IT WAS A HORRIBLE MESS! THE GRAY CLOUD HAD STRIPPED THE MEN OF THEIR FLESH... EVEN SUCKED THEIR BONES DRY! WHEN I TOUCHED A BONE, IT CRUMBLED INTO DUST...'

I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT ALIVE! I'LL *STARVE TO DEATH!*

'THEN I THOUGHT OF THE TINS OF EMERGENCY RATIONS STORED IN THE FOOD BINS! I EXAMINED THE EMERGENCY FOOD CAREFULLY! THE STUFF HAD GOTTEN INTO THE REFRIGERATORS BY EATING THROUGH THE RUBBER INSULATING STRIPS AND HAD DEVOURED EVERYTHING... BUT THE TINS OF EMERGENCY RATIONS WERE STILL GOOD...'

I'LL MOVE THE FOOD INTO THE TANK SO I WON'T STARVE TO DEATH IN CASE THE STUFF COMES BACK...

'I HAD BEGUN MOVING THE TINS OF EMERGENCY RATIONS INTO THE TANK WHEN THE GRAY CLOUD RETURNED! IT STREAMED IN THE OPEN PORT AS I RAN FOR MY HIDEOUT...'

'I SLAMMED THE TANK DOOR BEHIND ME AS THE STUFF LICKED AT MY HEELS...'

OH-OH! SOME OF IT GOT *IN...*

'A SMALL PUFF OF THE HIDEOUS CLOUD HAD MANAGED TO GET INSIDE MY TANK BEFORE I COULD SHUT THE GRAY DEATH OUT! IT STREAKED AT ME! I FELT A STINGING BURN AS IT ATE THROUGH MY SPACE SUIT...'

OWWWWWW! BLASTED STUFF!

'I STARTED THE AIR-PRESSURE MOTOR INSIDE THE TANK! WITH A HOLE IN IT, MY SPACE-SUIT WAS USELESS! SOON THE TANK WAS FILLED WITH AIR! MEANWHILE THE LITTLE PUFF OF GRAY HAD ATTACKED AGAIN! I STRIPPED OFF MY SPACE SUIT AND FLUNG IT TO THE FLOOR! THEN I GOT AN IDEA...'

I'VE GOT *MATCHES* HERE, SOMEWHERE...

'AS THE GRAY DEATH STREAMED TOWARD ME FOR ANOTHER ATTACK, I STRUCK A MATCH! THE PUFF SEEMED TO HESITATE AS IF IT SENSED AND FEARED THE FLAME...'

IF...IF IT'S *AFRAID*... THERE MUST BE A *REASON!*

6

'I PLUNGED THE LIT MATCH INTO THE GRAY CLOUD AND IT FLARED UP IN A SHEET OF FLAME...'

'OUTSIDE MY TANK I COULD HEAR THE REST OF THE GRAY DEATH HISSING AND HAMMERING, AS THOUGH IT REALIZED WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THE SMALL PART THAT I HAD BURNED...'

'I EYED THE FEW TINS OF EMERGENCY RATIONS I HAD MANAGED TO MOVE INTO THE ATMOSPHERE-ADJUSTMENT TANK BEFORE THE HIDEOUS STUFF HAD RETURNED...'

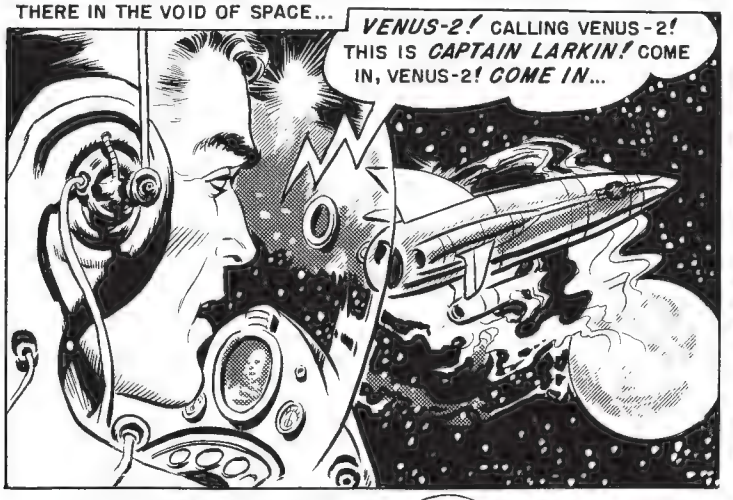
'AND SO, IN MY LAST DAYS, I AM WRITING ALL THAT HAS HAPPENED! MY FOOD IS GONE! MY HAND GROWS WEAK! I CAN HARDLY HOLD THE PENCIL!'
IS THAT ALL THERE *IS*, CAPTAIN LARKIN?

NO! THERE'S *ONE MORE PARAGRAPH!* IT'S SCRAWLY... HARDLY LEGIBLE! IT SAYS, 'I THINK THE GRAY-CLOUD-OF-DEATH IS PART OF THE VAST CLOUD LAYER THAT SURROUNDS VENUS! IT IS THE *FORM OF LIFE THAT EXISTS THERE!*' THE REST IS ILLEGIBLE!
C'MON! LET'S GET BACK TO THE VENUS-2!

THE INVESTIGATORS FROM THE VENUS-2 MADE THEIR WAY TO THE PORT OF THE RAVAGED VENUS-1...

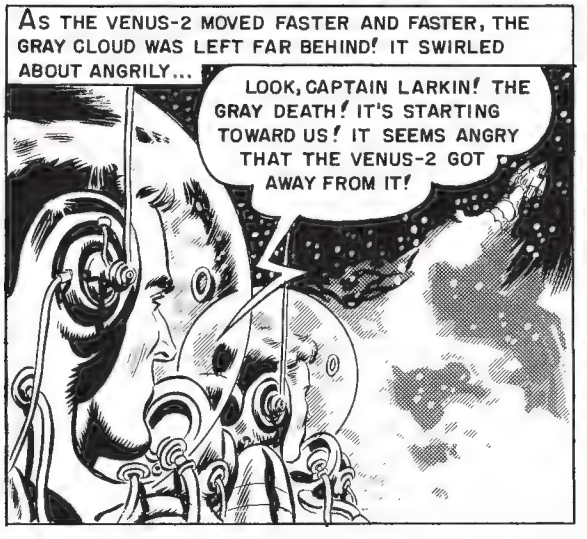
CAPTAIN LARKIN STOOD FRAMED IN THE PORT OF THE VENUS-1, GAZING OUT OVER THE BLACK STRETCH OF SPACE THAT SEPARATED THEM FROM VENUS-2! THE OTHERS CROWDED BEHIND HIM...

A GRAY CLOUD SWIRLED AND TWISTED AROUND VENUS-2 AS IT HUNG THERE IN THE VOID OF SPACE...



FROM THE PORT OF THE WRECKED VENUS-1, CAPTAIN LARKIN WATCHED THE VENUS-2 FIRE ITS ROCKETS AND BEGIN MOVING AWAY...

AS THE VENUS-2 MOVED FASTER AND FASTER, THE GRAY CLOUD WAS LEFT FAR BEHIND! IT SWIRLED ABOUT ANGRILY...



THE MEN THAT THE VENUS-2 LEFT BEHIND ON THE STRIPPED VENUS-1 WATCHED WITH MORBID FASCINATION AS THE GRAY CLOUD SPED TOWARDS THEM... WATCHED AS CERTAIN DEATH NEARED...

THE END

THE INVADERS

THE LAUNCHING SITE WAS DESERTED! THE ONLY MOVEMENT SEEN WAS A THIN WISP OF SMOKE THAT ROSE LAZILY FROM THE CHIMNEY OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING! THE EXPERIMENTAL SATELLITE ROCKET-BOMB XS-1 STOOD SILENTLY AMID THE ABANDONED EQUIPMENT! FROM THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING CAME THE IRRITATING VOICE OF A RADIO ANNOUNCER...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! THE NEXT VOICE YOU HEAR WILL BE THAT OF THE *PRESIDENT* OF...

INSIDE THE GLASS-WALLED ADMINISTRATION BUILDING A GROUP OF GRIM-FACED MEN WERE GATHERED AROUND THE RADIO RECEIVER . . .

MY FELLOW CITIZENS! IT IS WITH SORROW IN MY HEART AND A GREAT DREAD OF THE FUTURE FOR ALL OF US THAT I MUST REPORT THE FOLLOWING! I HAVE, THIS MORNING, ACCEPTED THE *ENEMY'S UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER TERMS!* OUR ARMIES HAVE BEEN...

IT'S *OVER! ALL OVER!*

WE'VE LOST THE WAR!

THE VOICE OF THE PRESIDENT CONTINUED IN AN EXPRESSIONLESS MONOTONE! ONE OF THE LISTENERS BEGAN TO WEEP! ANOTHER GREW RED-FACED AND ANGRY...

ALL WE *NEEDED* WAS *ANOTHER WEEK!* ANOTHER WEEK AND WE'D HAVE *FINISHED THE SATELLITE ROCKET...*

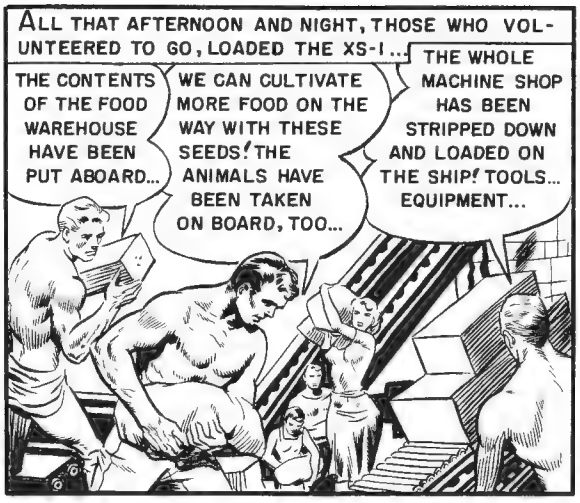
...WE COULD HAVE *BEATEN THEM WITH IT... BLOWN THEM SKY HIGH!*

...I THEREFORE BEG YOU ALL... IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY MORE USELESS BLOODSHED... *DO NOT RESIST! LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS...*

WOOD

1

NEVER! I'LL NEVER GIVE IN TO THOSE DIRTY...
WAIT! GENTLEMEN! LISTEN TO ME! I'VE GOT AN IDEA!
THE SHIP! THE XS-1! SHE WAS BUILT TO BE FIRED OUT INTO SPACE WHERE SHE'D FALL INTO AN ORBIT AND CIRCLE US AS A SATELLITE! THEN, BY RADIO, WE WERE GOING TO GUIDE HER INTO A STRATEGIC ENEMY TARGET! WE NEEDED BUT A WEEK TO FINISH HER! SHE LACKS ONLY THE EXPLOSIVE CHARGE...
WELL, KEVE! WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?
LOOK AT HER! SHE'S A PERFECT ROCKET SHIP... CAPABLE OF SPACE TRAVEL...
YOU MEAN... ESCAPE IN HER?
WHY NOT? WHAT HAVE WE GOT TO LOSE? WE'VE LOST THE WAR! SOON OUR COUNTRY WILL BE OCCUPIED BY ENEMY TROOPS! WE'VE LOST OUR FREEDOM...
BUT WHERE CAN WE GO? WE CAN'T JUST SHOOT OUT INTO SPACE AND STAY THERE!
WE'LL GO TO ANOTHER PLANET... START A COLONY... BEGIN AGAIN!
IT'S CRAZY! NO ONE'S EVER ATTEMPTED SPACE TRAVEL BEFORE! DO YOU SUGGEST WE TAKE OUR FAMILIES ALONG?
OF COURSE! WOULD YOU LEAVE THEM TO BE VICTIMS OF THE OCCUPYING FORCES?
I'M FOR IT, KEVE! LIFE IS WORTHLESS WITHOUT FREEDOM! AT LEAST THIS MIGHT BE A CHANCE...
THOSE WHO WANT TO GO ARE WELCOME! THOSE WHO PREFER TO REMAIN AND BECOME SLAVES TO THE CONQUERORS CAN DO SO! WE LEAVE TOMORROW AT DAWN! NOW, THERE'S MUCH WORK TO BE DONE...
COUNT ME AND MY FAMILY OUT!
I'M COMING! COUNT ME IN!
2

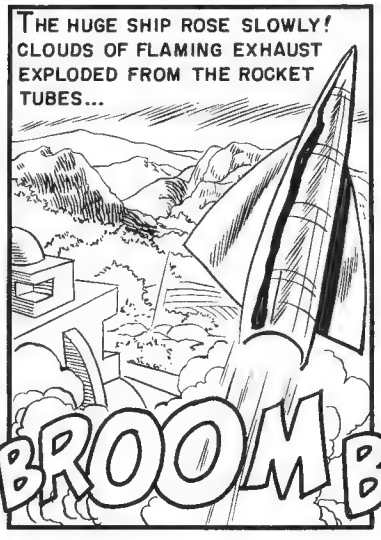

ALL THAT AFTERNOON AND NIGHT, THOSE WHO VOLUNTEERED TO GO, LOADED THE XS-1...
THE CONTENTS OF THE FOOD WAREHOUSE HAVE BEEN PUT ABOARD...
WE CAN CULTIVATE MORE FOOD ON THE WAY WITH THESE SEEDS! THE ANIMALS HAVE BEEN TAKEN ON BOARD, TOO...
THE WHOLE MACHINE SHOP HAS BEEN STRIPPED DOWN AND LOADED ON THE SHIP! TOOLS... EQUIPMENT...

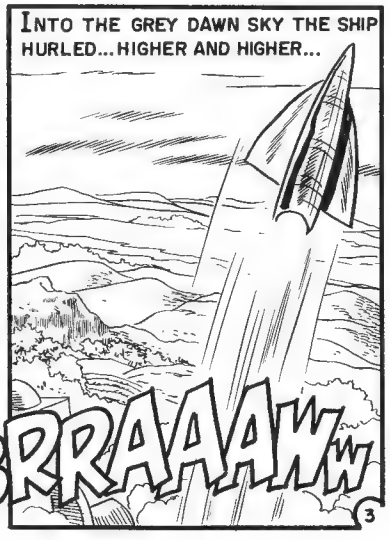
WE'VE PACKED EVERYTHING FROM THE SUPPLY ROOMS ABOARD! SHEET METAL... PLASTIC... CLOTH... SPARE PARTS...
GOOD! WE'VE GOT SPACE SUITS TO CONSTRUCT ON THE WAY IN ORDER TO EXPLORE LIKELY PLANETS...
CLANK CLANK

EVERYTHING AVAILABLE THAT MIGHT BE NEEDED FOR THE TRIP WAS PLACED IN THE SHIP...
WHAT ABOUT OXYGEN? WILL WE HAVE ENOUGH?
WE'VE LOADED ALL THE TANKS WE HAVE! IT WILL LAST TILL THE PLANTS WE CULTIVATE BEGIN TO MANUFACTURE OXYGEN FROM THE CARBON DIOXIDE WE EXHALE...

AND WHEN DAWN CAME, THE SHIP WAS READY! THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO WERE GOING CAME TO THE LAUNCHING SITE... WOMEN... CHILDREN...
GET ABOARD AND LIE DOWN ON THE MATTRESSES YOU'LL FIND...
DADDY! WHERE ARE WE GOING?
QUIET, LITTLE ONE! JUST DO AS YOU ARE TOLD!
TAKE OFF IN TEN MINUTES...

FINALLY THE FUGITIVES HAD ALL BOARDED THE SHIP! THE SECONDS TICKED OFF... AND THEN...
ROCKETS AWAY!
WHR-ROOOM


THE HUGE SHIP ROSE SLOWLY! CLOUDS OF FLAMING EXHAUST EXPLODED FROM THE ROCKET TUBES...
BROOM

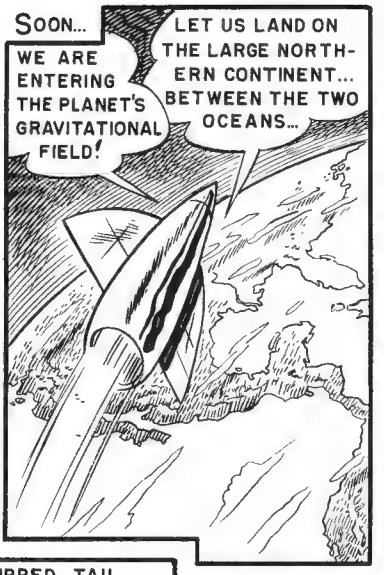

INTO THE GREY DAWN SKY THE SHIP HURLED... HIGHER AND HIGHER...
BRRAAAAWW
3

AS THE SLEEK ROCKET SHIP SPED OUT OF THE ATMOSPHERE, THE SKY BECAME BLACK, PIN-POINTED HERE AND THERE BY DISTANT STARS...
WE'RE ON OUR WAY!
SOMEWHERE OUT THERE IS A PLANET WAITING FOR US... A PLANET WHERE WE CAN BEGIN A NEW CIVILIZATION... ONE OF PEACE...
A PLACE WHERE THERE WILL BE NO HATRED... NO WARS...
LEAVING GRAVITATIONAL FIELD! CUT OFF THE POWER! WE MUST CONSERVE OUR FUEL!
THE HUGE SHIP STREAKED THROUGH THE VOID OF OUTER SPACE IN FREE-FALL...
BRING ME THE ASTRONOMICAL CHARTS! WE MUST PICK OUT OUR DESTINATION...
YES, KEVE! HERE YOU ARE, SIR!
KEVE, WHO HAD BEEN SELECTED AS THE LEADER OF THE FLEEING SPACE TRAVELERS, STUDIED THE CHARTS CAREFULLY...
WE MUST FIND A PLANET SIMILAR TO THE ONE WE LEFT...
...ONE THAT IS ABOUT THE SAME SIZE... WITH AN ATMOSPHERE CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING LIFE! LET'S SEE, NOW...
AFTER MANY DAYS OF CALCULATIONS AND INTENSE RESEARCH, A PLANET WAS FOUND...
THERE... THERE IT IS! IF OUR FIGURES ARE CORRECT, WE HAVE FOUND OUR DESTINATION!
IS THIS IT, KEVE?
YES! THAT IS IT! WE'LL PROBABLY HAVE THE PLANET ALL TO OURSELVES! IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG TRIP, MY FRIENDS! AND THERE'S MUCH TO DO...
THE WOMEN HAVE BEGUN THE PLANTING, KEVE! SOON WE WILL BE GROWING OUR OWN FOOD!
4

THE DAYS DRAGGED INTO WEEKS AND THE WEEKS BECAME MONTHS! BY THE END OF ONE YEAR...THE JOURNEY WAS HALF COMPLETED...
HOW DO WE STAND ON FOOD, KEVE?
THE FIRST HARVEST WAS GOOD! THE COWS HAVE REPRODUCED! WE ARE WELL FIXED, HAN!
ONE DAY...
WE ARE ENTERING THE SOLAR SYSTEM WHICH CONTAINS OUR DESTINATION!
IT WON'T BE LONG NOW...
SOON THE TINY SPECK IN THE SKY GREW BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER AS THE ROCKET SHIP SPED TOWARD ITS GOAL...
LOOK! ON THE TELE-SCREEN! YOU CAN SEE THE PLANET CLEARLY, NOW!
YES! SEE! CLOUD LAYERS!
THEN IT HAS AN ATMOSPHERE!
YES! AND OCEANS, TOO!
AS THE ROCKET SHIP DREW CLOSER...
THE LAND AREAS ARE GREEN... LIKE OUR OWN PLANET...
VEGETATION! A SIGN OF LIFE!
RIVERS...MANY RIVERS RUN THROUGH THE LAND AREAS...
THE SOIL WILL BE RICH AND FERTILE!
THINK OF IT! A FRESH NEW PLANET TO BUILD A CIVILIZATION UPON! A NEW CIVILIZATION PROFITING BY ALL THE MISTAKES OF THE WAR-DEVASTATED ONE WE LEFT BEHIND...
A PLACE WHERE OUR CHILDREN CAN GROW UP WITHOUT FEAR...UNSELFISH... KNOWING ONLY LOVE!
5

THE STRANGE PLANET LOOMED LARGE NOW...FILLING THE SCREEN! THE UNFAMILIAR LAND FORMATIONS WERE QUITE CLEAR...

SOON...



THE SHIP ENTERED THE PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE...

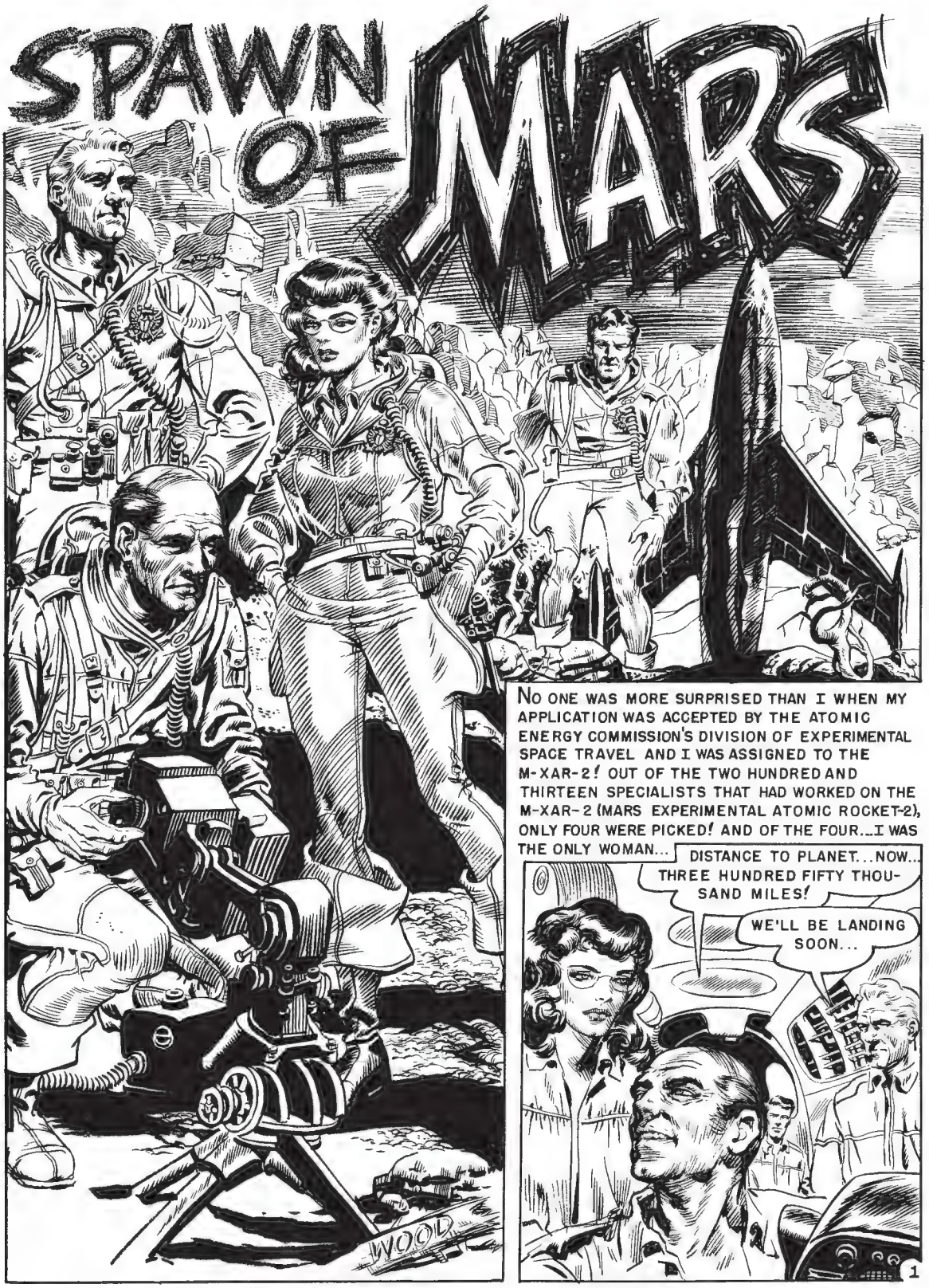
SUDDENLY, AS THE ROCKET SHIP SLIPPED, TAIL FIRST, TOWARD THE SURFACE OF THE NEW PLANET...

PERHAPS THEY ARE A PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE!
WHAT'S THAT? STRANGE AIRCRAFT!
THEY BEAR MARKINGS! WHITE STARS! SEE HOW THEY SWOOP DOWN! THEY HAVE COME TO GREET US!

THE WEIRD AIRCRAFT ZOOMED DOWN UPON THE HELPLESS, PLUMMETING SPACE SHIP! FROM THEIR SHARP NOSES AND WING EDGES CAME FLASHES OF FLAME...

WITH A TREMENDOUS ROAR, THE SPACE SHIP EXPLODED...

AS THE LAST SMOKING FRAGMENT SPINS EARTHWARD CRAZILY...THE U. S. AIR FORCE JET PLANES TURN HOMEWARD...


SPAWN OF MARS
NO ONE WAS MORE SURPRISED THAN I WHEN MY APPLICATION WAS ACCEPTED BY THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION'S DIVISION OF EXPERIMENTAL SPACE TRAVEL AND I WAS ASSIGNED TO THE M-XAR-2! OUT OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN SPECIALISTS THAT HAD WORKED ON THE M-XAR-2 (MARS EXPERIMENTAL ATOMIC ROCKET-2), ONLY FOUR WERE PICKED! AND OF THE FOUR...I WAS THE ONLY WOMAN...
DISTANCE TO PLANET...NOW... THREE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND MILES!
WE'LL BE LANDING SOON...
WOOD
1

THE TAKE-OFF FROM EARTH HAD BEEN LITTLE MORE THAN ROUTINE! I HAD BEEN ON THE FOURTH ROCKET TO THE MOON! BUT NOW... NOW WE WERE NEARING *MARS*...

THERE'S *DEIMOS*, MARS' OUTER *SATELLITE!* ITS DIAMETER IS JUST A LITTLE OVER *TEN MILES!*

MISS BELMONT! WE'LL BE LANDING SOON! BETTER *STRAP IN!*

AND SO, AS THE M-XAR-2 PLUMMETED TOWARD THE SURFACE, IT WAS TURNED BY ITS GYRO UNTIL IT FELL... TAIL FIRST...

ROCKET TUBES... COMMENCE FIRING...

ROCKET TUBES... NOW FIRING...

YES... I, JEAN BELMONT, WOULD BE THE FIRST *WOMAN* TO SET FOOT ON THE MYSTERIOUS RED PLANET...

EVERYONE STRAPPED IN?

RIGHT, DOCTOR WHEEMS!

RIGHT, SIR!

FROM MY RECLINED POSITION ON MY BLACK-OUT COUCH, I WATCHED IN FASCINATION AS THE AMBER COLORED SPHERE LOOMED LARGER AND LARGER ON THE COLOR TELE-SCREEN...

THE FALLING SHIP SHUDDERED AS THE ATOMIC ROCKET ENGINES BEGAN TO FIRE! THE SHIP BEGAN TO SLOW IN ITS FALL TOWARDS THE SURFACE OF MARS...

SOON OUR SPEED BEGAN TO INCREASE AS MARS' GRAVITATIONAL PULL TOOK HOLD AND BEGAN TO SUCK US TOWARD IT...

NOW ENTERING *G-FIELD! GYRO ...ON!*

GYRO *ON,* SIR! SHIP *TURNING...*

SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A SHARP JOLT... AND IT SEEMED AS THOUGH THE SHIP WOULD BREAK APART! THE ROCKETS SHUT OFF AUTOMATICALLY! EVERYTHING WAS STILL! WE WERE DOWN...

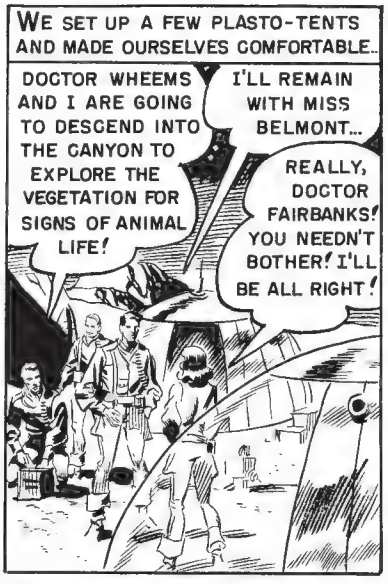
I RUSHED TO THE PORT AND STARED OUT! A BREATH-TAKING SIGHT MET MY EYES! THE SURFACE OF MARS... NEVER BEFORE SEEN AT SUCH CLOSE RANGE BY HUMAN EYES...

LOOK! WE'VE LANDED ON A *PLATEAU* BETWEEN *TWO CANYONS!* THERE'S *VEGETATION* DOWN THERE...
THESE *CANYONS* MUST BE THE SO-CALLED *'CANALS'!* THERE'S A NETWORK OF THEM COVERING MARS...

WELL, MISS BELMONT? WHAT'S THE WORD ON ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS?
OXYGEN CONTENT... *SUFFICIENT!* HMMMM! *PRESSURE'S LESS*, WE'LL BE ABLE TO MOVE ABOUT *WITHOUT SPACE SUITS*, IF WE USE THE *DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER*...

AND SO, AFTER SPENDING SOME TIME IN THE DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER, WE CLIMBED FROM THE SHIP...

WE SET UP A FEW PLASTO-TENTS AND MADE OURSELVES COMFORTABLE...


DOCTOR WHEEMS AND I ARE GOING TO DESCEND INTO THE CANYON TO EXPLORE THE VEGETATION FOR SIGNS OF ANIMAL LIFE!
I'LL REMAIN WITH MISS BELMONT...
REALLY, DOCTOR FAIRBANKS! YOU NEEDN'T BOTHER! I'LL BE ALL RIGHT!

DOCTOR FAIRBANKS, OUR NAVIGATOR, WAS THE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE WHOSE AGE APPROXIMATED MY OWN! DOCTOR WHEEMS, OUR ATOMIC ENGINEER, WAS FORTY-ISH... AND DOCTOR BRADLEY, OUR BIO-PHYSICIST, WAS IN HIS EARLY FIFTIES...

ALL RIGHT, MISS BELMONT... IF YOU *INSIST!*
I DO, DR. FAIRBANKS! THIS PLATEAU IS QUITE BARE! I'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO GET TO THE SHIP IN AN EMERGENCY!

FAIRBANKS SHRUGGED AND MOVED OFF WITH THE OTHERS! I SMILED AFTER HIM! IN HIS OWN SHY WAY, HE'D BEEN TRYING TO MAKE A PLAY FOR ME DURING THE WHOLE TRIP! AFTER THEY DISAPPEARED OVER THE CANYON EDGE, I BUSIED MYSELF SETTING UP MY EQUIPMENT! I WAS THE M-XAR-2'S GEOLOGIST! AFTER AN HOUR I BEGAN TO FEEL VERY STRANGE...

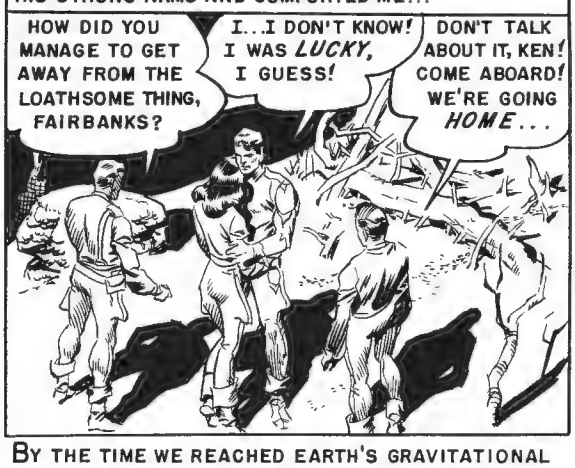
I TRIED TO IGNORE THE STRANGE, UNCOMFORTABLE FEELING I HAD... AND BUSIED MYSELF WITH MY INSTRUMENTS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY! WHEN MY THREE ASSOCIATES RETURNED...
WELL? WHAT DID YOU FIND?
WE DIDN'T ENCOUNTER A THING, MISS BELMONT!
WE DID FIND SOME TRACKS, THOUGH! THERE'S DEFINITELY SOME SORT OF ANIMAL LIFE HERE!
THAT NIGHT WE ALL SAT ABOUT THE CAMPFIRE DISCUSSING OUR VARIOUS OBSERVATIONS! FINALLY I COULDN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER...
I...DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY THIS, BUT I HAVE THE FEELING WE'RE BEING WATCHED! SOMETHING IS OUT THERE... IN THE DARKNESS!
NOW, NOW, JEAN! DON'T LET YOUR IMAGINATION GET THE BEST OF YOU!
THE NEXT DAY, THE THREE MALE MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION SET OUT ONCE MORE TO EXPLORE...
WE'LL BE BACK BEFORE NIGHTFALL, MISS BELMONT!
WHY DON'T YOU STAY IN THE SHIP TODAY, JEAN?
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT, DOCTOR FAIRBANKS!
I JUST THOUGHT YOU'D FEEL SAFER...
TOWARDS LATE AFTERNOON, DR. WHEEMS AND DR. BRADLEY RETURNED... ALONE! THEY WERE PALE AS GHOSTS AND SEEMED QUITE SHAKEN!
WHERE...WHERE'S DOCTOR FAIRBANKS?
WE WERE ATTACKED! IT WAS HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE!
IT WAS THE MOST GHASTLY MONSTER IMAGINABLE! IT SPRANG FROM THE UNDERBRUSH DOWN THERE...
BEFORE WE COULD ACT, IT CAUGHT FAIRBANKS IN ITS SLIMY, DISGUSTING TENTACLES AND SLITHERED OFF WITH HIM...
THEN HE...
HE'S DEAD, JEAN! HE COULDN'T HAVE SURVIVED...
LORD! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! IF I SEE ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE CREATURES, I'LL GO OUT OF MY MIND!
4

I WAS HEARTBROKEN OVER DR. FAIRBANKS' DEATH! WE PACKED THE EQUIPMENT INTO THE M-XAR-2 AND PREPARED TO TAKE OFF...

I HAD BEEN STANDING NEAR THE PORT WHEN A MOVEMENT CAUGHT MY EYE! I STARED OUT OVER THE BARE PLATEAU! A RAGGED FIGURE STUMBLED TOWARD THE SHIP...

I SWUNG OPEN THE PORT...PRESSED THE DESCENT LADDER SWITCH...AND RUSHED DOWN! I RAN TO KEN AND THREW MYSELF INTO HIS ARMS...

I BEGAN TO SOB UNCONTROLLABLY! KEN HELD ME IN HIS STRONG ARMS AND COMFORTED ME...

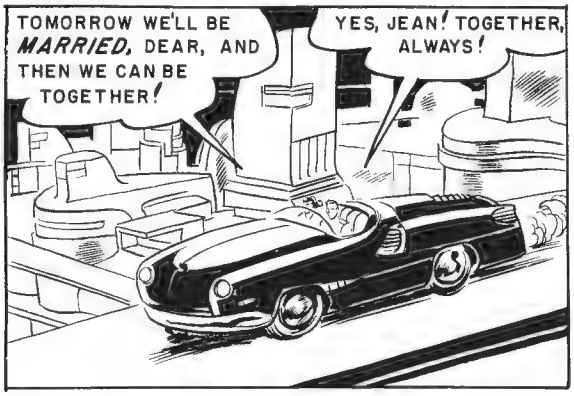

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO GET AWAY FROM THE LOATHSOME THING, FAIRBANKS?
I...I DON'T KNOW! I WAS LUCKY, I GUESS!
DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, KEN! COME ABOARD! WE'RE GOING HOME...

ALL THE WAY TO EARTH, I NURSED KEN BACK TO HEALTH! I GUESS THE STRAIN HAD BEEN TOO MUCH FOR ME! I BEGAN TO SUFFER FROM SEVERE HEADACHES.

BY THE TIME WE REACHED EARTH'S GRAVITATIONAL FIELD, MY HEADACHES HAD SUBSIDED... AND KEN AND I WERE RADIANT...

KEN COMPLAINED THAT THE EXCITEMENT OF OUR ARRIVAL WOULD BE TOO MUCH FOR HIM, SO HE REMAINED IN THE SHIP WHILE DOCTOR BRADLEY, DOCTOR WHEEMS AND I RECEIVED THE CHEERS OF THE CROWD THAT HAD GATHERED TO WITNESS OUR RETURN ...

AFTER THE CHEERING CROWDS HAD LEFT AND THE LANDING SITE WAS DESERTED, I TOOK KEN TO A WAITING ATOMICAR...AND WE SPED INTO TOWN TO HIS APARTMENT...



AND SO, THE NEXT DAY I BECAME MRS. KENNETH FAIRBANKS! WITH THE MONEY WE HAD RECEIVED FROM OUR MARTIAN EXCURSION, KEN AND I BOUGHT A SECLUDED LITTLE PLACE IN THE COUNTRY...

MONTHS WENT BY! KEN AND I WERE VERY HAPPY! THEN...ONE DAY...WE RECEIVED A LETTER...

THE NEXT DAY, DOCTOR AND MRS. WHEEMS ARRIVED! KEN WAS IN HIS ROOM DRESSING AT THE TIME...

MRS. WHEEMS DISAPPEARED UP THE STAIRS AND DOCTOR WHEEMS AND I BEGAN TO CHAT! SUDDENLY...

MRS. WHEEMS CAME DOWN THE STAIRS...HALF-RUNNING, HALF-FALLING! SHE WAS WHITE AS A SHEET! SHE RAN TO THE DOOR AND RUSHED OUTSIDE...

I WATCHED FROM THE DOORWAY AS DOCTOR WHEEMS CAUGHT UP WITH HIS WIFE! I COULD SEE HER WIDE-EYED TERROR AS SHE POINTED TO THE UPPER PART OF THE HOUSE...

SUDDENLY, I HAD A STRANGE SENSATION! A FEELING THAT I WAS BEING WATCHED! THE SAME FEELING I HAD HAD BACK THERE... ON THAT MARTIAN PLATEAU...

6.

I SPUN AROUND! KEN WAS ON THE STAIRS...
OH...KEN! SOMETHING VERY STRANGE JUST HAPPENED TO MRS. WHEEMS!
I KNOW!
THE SOUND OF AN ENGINE MADE ME TURN! DOCTOR WHEEMS' ATOMICAR WAS SPEEDING AWAY...
THEY'RE... LEAVING!
LET THEM GO, JEAN! I...
KEN TOOK ME IN HIS ARMS AND LOOKED INTO MY EYES SOFTLY...
I'VE GOT TO TALK TO YOU... JEAN!
WHAT IS IT, KEN? I DON'T UNDERSTAND ALL OF THIS...
PERHAPS I CAN EXPLAIN! YOU SEE... IT ALL BEGAN WHEN I FIRST SAW YOU... WHEN YOUR SHIP LANDED AND YOU CAME OUT ONTO THE PLATEAU! I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU IMMEDIATELY!
KEN! STOP IT! YOU CAME WITH US...
NO, DEAREST! I DIDN'T! THE REAL KEN FAIRBANKS CAME WITH YOU! I WAS THERE BEFORE YOU! I WATCHED YOU... HUNG AROUND YOUR CAMPFIRE TILL I LEARNED YOUR LANGUAGE... THEN... ATTACKED KEN AND KILLED HIM! YOU SEE... I AM A MARTIAN!
BUT... YOU... KEN... YOU BOTH...
YOU ONLY THINK YOU ARE SEEING KEN, DARLING! I MAKE YOU THINK IT! YOU'RE HYPNOTIZED! REMEMBER THE HEADACHES? I... I THOUGHT I COULD TAKE HIS PLACE THIS WAY... THAT MAYBE YOU'D LOVE ME AS I LOVE YOU!
I DO... I DO! I LOVE YOU! YOU KNOW THAT...
IN REALITY, I AM VERY HORRIBLE BY YOUR STANDARDS, JEAN! YOU REMEMBER HOW WHEEMS AND BRADLEY DESCRIBED ME WHEN I ATTACKED KEN? THAT'S WHY I MUST PROTECT YOUR EYES FROM ACTUALLY SEEING ME BY THIS HYPNOTIC SCREEN...
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE! I LOVE YOU FOR WHAT YOU ARE...
7.

OH, DARLING! THEN WE *CAN* BE HAPPY! WE'LL GO *AWAY*... *BEFORE DOCTOR WHEEMS COMES BACK*...
YES, DEAR! I'LL PACK A FEW THINGS...

AS WE SPED UPSTATE, I STUDIED KEN! NATURALLY I *DIDN'T BELIEVE HIM!* THE SHOCK OF BEING CAPTURED BY THAT HORRIBLE MARTIAN MONSTER HAD BEEN TOO MUCH FOR HIM...
BUT...IN TIME...HE'LL GET BETTER! POOR MRS. WHEEMS! KEN MUST HAVE SURPRISED HER...
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, JEAN?

KEN LOOKED AT ME! I SMILED INTO HIS SOFT BLUE EYES! HE SMILED AT ME WARMLY! WE NEVER SAW THE SHARP TURN IN THE ROAD...
LOOK OUT!

WHEN I OPENED MY EYES, I WAS LYING IN THE MIDST OF THE WRECKED ATOMICAR! I GLANCED OVER AT WHERE KEN SHOULD HAVE BEEN! INSTEAD...LYING BESIDE ME WAS THE MOST *LOATHSOME, DISGUSTING CREATURE* I HAD EVER SEEN...
YAAAAAAAH!

IN MY HYSTERIA AND NAUSEA, I CRAWLED FROM THE CAR AND STUMBLED AWAY! I DIDN'T EVEN LOOK BACK AS IT EXPLODED INTO FLAME...
OH, GOD...GOD...

WHEN I CAME TO, I WAS LYING IN A HOSPITAL BED! I WOKE UP SCREAMING HIS NAME...
...*KEN!* I...I... *WHERE AM I?*
YOU WERE IN AN ATOMICAR WRECK, MRS. FAIRBANKS! YOUR... YOUR...HUSBAND WAS *KILLED*... BURNED TO ASHES...

MY... MY HUSBAND...
WE FOUND HIS IDENTIFICATION BRACELET! I...I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, MRS. FAIRBANKS. BUT... PERHAPS YOU MAY FIND COMFORT IN YOUR HOUR OF SADNESS! WE'VE EXAMINED YOU! DO YOU KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A BABY?
8.

When we left the planetary paradise that was their home...
THE MAIDENS CRIED
WOOD
MY NAME IS GLENN VALENT! WHAT I AM ABOUT TO TELL YOU BEGAN THE DAY OUR SHIP LANDED ON THE PLANET I SHALL CALL 205-D! WE HAD BEEN 'HEDGE-HOPPING' ABOUT THE GALAXY...STOPPING FROM TIME TO TIME AT PREDETERMINED PLANETS IN SEARCH OF RAW MATERIALS SORELY NEEDED BACK ON EARTH! 205-D WAS TO BE OUR LAST STOP BEFORE RETURNING TO EARTH! WE'D BEEN GONE OVER TWO YEARS AND WERE QUITE ANXIOUS TO BEGIN THE TRIP HOME...
ALL RIGHT, MEN! WE'RE DOWN! LET'S GET INTO OUR SPACE-SUITS!
THANK GOODNESS THIS IS THE LAST SURVEY WE HAVE TO MAKE! I'M SO DARN HOMESICK!
1

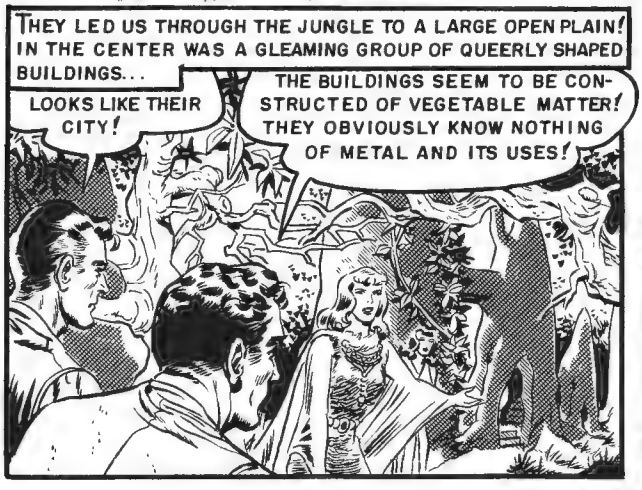
ONE BY ONE WE DONNED OUR SPACE-SUITS AND DESCENDED FROM OUR SHIP TO THE SURFACE OF 205-D...
COMMANDER VALENT! THERE'S NO NEED TO USE OUR SPACE-SUITS! OXYGEN CONTENT IS SUFFICIENT!
GOOD! THEN WE CAN REMOVE OUR HELMETS! I SUGGEST WE WEAR THE SUITS FOR PROTECTION! NO TELLING WHAT WE'LL RUN INTO!
THERE WERE FIVE OF US IN THE CREW OF THE EARTH FEDERATION'S GALACTIC EXPLORATION ROCKET SHIP! BESIDE MYSELF, THERE WERE ANDREW MARTIN, OUR NAVIGATOR...CARL WILLIAM, OUR GEOLOGIST...
HELP ME WITH MY INSTRUMENTS, ANDY!
SURE THING, CARL!
...HERBERT GRODSKY, OUR FLIGHT ENGINEER AND ROBERT REILL, OUR BIOLOGIST...
HOW'S OUR FUEL HOLDING OUT, HERB?
WE'VE GOT MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR THE TRIP BACK TO EARTH, BOB!
CARL SET UP HIS INSTRUMENTS AND BEGAN TO CHECK READINGS...
HOW'S IT LOOK, CARL?
NOTHING DOING, GLENN! NOT A BLEEP! NO RADIO-ACTIVE MATERIAL ON THIS ROCK, EITHER!
THAT HAD BEEN THE STORY WHEREVER WE'D GONE! WITH EARTH'S URANIUM SUPPLY PRACTICALLY EXHAUSTED, THE WORLD GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN SENDING OUT SHIPS LIKE OURS ALL OVER THE GALAXY, SEARCHING FOR NEW SOURCES OF SUPPLY! EXCEPT FOR A RARE PLANET, THEY'D FOUND NONE TO SPEAK OF! WE'D HAD NO LUCK EITHER...
WE'LL DO SOME EXPLORING AND START HOME TOMORROW!
HOW ABOUT GETTING STARTED RIGHT NOW, GLENN?
BOB'S GOT TO HAVE TIME TO GATHER HIS DATA, HERB! TOMORROW'LL BE SOON ENOUGH!
OKAY, GLENN! I'M JUST... A LITTLE ANXIOUS!
WE BEGAN MOVING OVER THE STRANGE TERRAIN! THERE WERE MANY FORMS OF ALIEN ANIMALS BUT NOTHING VICIOUS LOOKING...
THAT'S STRANGE! THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY INSECT LIFE ON THIS PLANET!
YOU'RE RIGHT, BOB! THAT'S A RELIEF! BOY! REMEMBER THOSE INSECTS ON 202-13? LORD, THEY WERE MURDER!
2

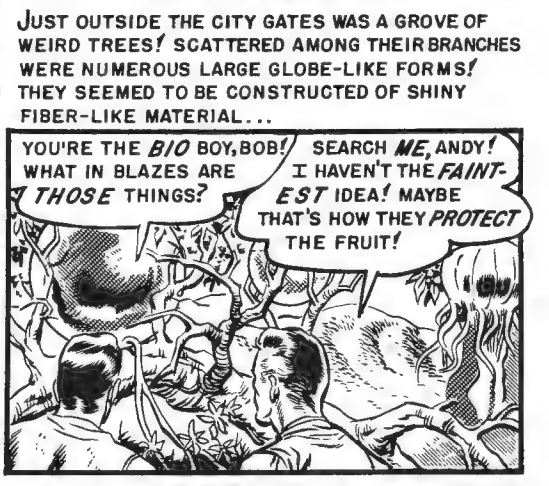
SUDDENLY, AS WE MOVED THROUGH THE STRANGE VEGETATION, WE CAME UPON A HORRIBLE LOOKING LITTLE MONSTER FEEDING UPON ONE OF THE HARMLESS ANIMALS WE'D RUN ACROSS!
LOOK!
UGH! IT'S PRACTICALLY DEVOURED ITS KILL!
WHEN IT SAW US, IT SCURRIED INTO THE HEAVY UNDERGROWTH AND DISAPPEARED! WE CONTINUED ON! THEN...
GLENN! THERE'S SOMETHING MOVING UP AHEAD! IT...
GOOD LORD!
SHE CAME OUT INTO THE OPEN! SHE WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING I'D EVER SEEN! SHE WASN'T EXACTLY HUMAN IN FORM! A TRANSLUCENT MEMBRANE STRETCHED FROM HER ARMS TO HER LEGS ON EACH SIDE...
IT'S A WOMAN!
NOT EXACTLY... BUT CLOSE ENOUGH!
SHE'S GORGEOUS!
SHE MOVED TOWARD US! OTHERS APPEARED...
LOOK! MORE!
EACH AS BEAUTIFUL AS SHE!
I'M DREAMING!
THERE MUST HAVE BEEN EIGHT OF THEM! THEY FLITTED AROUND US LIKE BIRDS!
BIRDS! THAT'S IT! THOSE WING-LIKE MEMBRANES! I BET AT ONE TIME THESE CREATURES COULD FLY!
BIRDS OR NO... THEY LOOK GOOD TO ME!
THE GORGEOUS WOMAN-LIKE CREATURES UTTERED NO SOUNDS! THEY JUST LOOKED AT US WITH THEIR EXOTIC-SHAPED EYES AND SMILED! THEN I REALIZED WHAT OUR ATTRACTION WAS...
HOLD IT, BOYS! HERE COME THE 'MEN'!
WOULDN'T YOU KNOW! JUST WHEN THINGS WERE GETTING INTERESTING!
THEIR 'MEN' WERE UGLY WIZENED LITTLE CREATURES! THE PLANET'S NATURE HAD PLAYED A FOUL TRICK ON ITS FEMALE BEAUTIES! THEIR MEN WERE HIDEOUS...
NO WONDER WE LOOK GOOD TO THEM!
LOOKS LIKE THEIR MEN DON'T LIKE US! SEE HOW THEY'RE GLARING AT US?
3

ONE OF THE SHRIVELED MALES STEPPED FORWARD, RAISED HIS MEMBRANED ARM, AND POINTED TOWARD OUR SHIP...
LOOKS LIKE HE WANTS US TO SCRAM!
JEALOUS!
OKAY! OKAY! WE'RE GOING!

BUT AS WE TURNED TO LEAVE, THE WOMAN-LIKE CREATURES CROWDED AROUND US! THEY SEEMED TO BE PLEADING WITH US TO STAY...
SEEMS AS THOUGH THE GALS WANT US TO HANG AROUND, GLENN!
THEY WON'T HAVE TO TWIST MY ARM!

THEN THE WOMEN BECKONED US TO FOLLOW THEM! THE MEN-CREATURES GLARED AFTER US AS WE MOVED ALONG AFTER THEM...
THEY'RE LIKE HUMANS... AND YET...
AW! STOP ANALYZING THEM, BOB! LET'S SEE WHAT THEY'RE UP TO!
WE'RE COMING, GIRLS!


THEY LED US THROUGH THE JUNGLE TO A LARGE OPEN PLAIN! IN THE CENTER WAS A GLEAMING GROUP OF QUEERLY SHAPED BUILDINGS...
LOOKS LIKE THEIR CITY!
THE BUILDINGS SEEM TO BE CONSTRUCTED OF VEGETABLE MATTER! THEY OBVIOUSLY KNOW NOTHING OF METAL AND ITS USES!


JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY GATES WAS A GROVE OF WEIRD TREES! SCATTERED AMONG THEIR BRANCHES WERE NUMEROUS LARGE GLOBE-LIKE FORMS! THEY SEEMED TO BE CONSTRUCTED OF SHINY FIBER-LIKE MATERIAL...
YOU'RE THE BIO BOY, BOB! WHAT IN BLAZES ARE THOSE THINGS?
SEARCH ME, ANDY! I HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST IDEA! MAYBE THAT'S HOW THEY PROTECT THE FRUIT!

WE PASSED UNDER THE GLOBE-BEDECKED TREES AND ON INTO THE CITY! THE BIRD-LIKE WOMEN MADE A BIG FUSS OVER US! OTHERS CAME TO GREET US! THEY BROUGHT US TRAYS OF FOOD...
HEY! THIS STUFF IS DELICIOUS!
I HOPE WE'RE NOT EATING ONE OF THOSE MONSTERS WE SAW EARLIER!

FROM TIME TO TIME ONE OF THE WRINKLED LITTLE MEN-CREATURES APPEARED... MOTIONED TO US ANGRILY TO GO... BUT SOON LEFT...
THIS IS THE LIFE, EH, HERB?
YEAH, MAN!
SAY, FELLOWS! HAVE YOU NOTICED THEY DON'T TALK.. YET THEY SEEM TO BE COMMUNICATING WITH EACH OTHER?
4

THE FEAST WAS WONDERFUL! THEN THE ENTERTAINMENT BEGAN! THE EXOTIC BEAUTIES WEAVED AND SWAYED IN EXCITING DANCE ROUTINES, CIRCLING THE FIRE THEY'D BUILT...

LISTEN, GLENN! REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS *LIKE?* HOT SWELTERING SUMMERS...FREEZING WINTERS! THE MOSQUITOES...EATING YOU UP ALIVE! THE CITIES...MILES AND MILES WITHOUT A TREE! AND THE *WOMEN*...
YEAH! YOU CAN *HAVE* THE *SINGLE STANDARD!* GIMME *THIS!*

THE CREW MEMBERS HAD MADE UP THEIR MINDS! FRANKLY, THE IDEA APPEALED TO ME TOO! I SHRUGGED AND AGREED...

...AND IF THE *BIRD-MEN* DON'T GET *ORNERY*, THIS COULD BE A DELIGHTFUL EXPERIENCE!
JUST THINK! WOMEN THAT *DON'T TALK!* NOT A *WORD!* MAN, OH MAN!

AND SO WE STAYED! THE LOVELY WOMEN-THINGS MADE US WELCOME! THEY GAVE US PLACES TO LIVE... WAITED ON US HAND AND FOOT! THEN...AFTER ABOUT TWO MONTHS...

ALL THOUGHTS OF EVER RETURNING TO EARTH LEFT US! WITH CARL BREAKING THE ICE, IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE ANDY ANNOUNCED HIS MARRIAGE PLANS...
YOU TOO, ANDY?
YEP! I'M CRAZY ABOUT HER!
CARL WAS MARRIED FIRST! HE WENT THROUGH THEIR STRANGE RITUAL WITH TONGUE-IN-CHEEK, AND WE ALL WISHED HIM LUCK...
IF WE EVER DECIDE TO RETURN TO EARTH, YOU'LL KNOCK 'EM DEAD WITH HER, CARL!
AW, CUT IT OUT, FELLOWS!
ANDY TOOK HIS BRIDE SOON AFTER...
HOW ABOUT YOU GUYS? WHEN DO YOU BREAK DOWN?
NOT ME, ANDY! I'M NOT THE MARRYING KIND! BESIDES, THERE'S TOO LARGE A SELECTION!
ONE DAY, HERB AND I WENT TO SEE CARL! IT WAS THE FIRST TIME WE'D VISITED HIM SINCE HIS MARRIAGE! WE FOUND HIM...STONE DEAD...
GOOD LORD! HE'S BEEN DEAD FOR A LONG TIME!
WE'VE GOT TO BURY HIM, GLENN!
CARL'S 'WIFE' SCREAMED HYSTERICALLY WHEN WE TOOK HIS BODY AWAY! SHE TRIED TO STOP US...DARTING AT US LIKE A HAWK WITH THOSE WING-LIKE ARMS...
LISTEN, SISTER! CUT IT OUT!
YEAH! WHERE WE COME FROM, WE BURY OUR DEAD!
WE WERE ALL BROKEN UP OVER CARL'S DEATH! WE BURIED HIM IN SPITE OF HIS 'WIFE'S' OBJECTIONS! THE BIRD-MEN JUST LEERED AT US AS THOUGH THEY WERE GLAD HE DIED! THEN, SOON AFTER, BOB ANNOUNCED...
WELL, YOU TWO! I'M GOING TO TAKE THE VOWS! CONGRATULATE ME! I'VE DECIDED TO GET MARRIED, TOO!
HEY, GLENN! HEAR THAT?
YEAH! I HEARD IT!
AND SO, BOB WAS MARRIED, TOO! THEN, ONE DAY, WE WENT TO SEE ANDY! WE'D NOT SEEN HIM SINCE CARL'S FUNERAL! WHEN WE ARRIVED AT HIS HOME, HIS WIFE TRIED TO STOP US FROM GOING IN! FINALLY, I PUSHED HER ASIDE...
ENOUGH OF THIS! I WANT TO SEE ANDY!
GLENN! LOOK! GOOD LORD!
6

ANDY HAD BEEN DEAD FOR SOME TIME! IN FACT THERE WASN'T MUCH LEFT OF HIM! ONE OF THOSE HORRIBLY DISGUSTING MONSTERS WAS FEEDING ON HIS REMAINS...
KILL IT! KILL THE HIDEOUS THING!
I WHIPPED OUT MY URANIUM-DISINTEGRATOR AND BLASTED THE CREATURE TO SMITHEREENS...
I SCREAMED AND RAVED AT ANDY'S WIFE FOR LETTING THE UGLY MONSTER DESTROY HIS BODY! SHE ONLY STARED BACK AT ME DUMBLY! LATER...
I CAN'T HELP FEELING THERE'S SOMETHING CRAZY GOING ON, HERB!
BOB! WE'VE GOT TO WARN HIM! C'MON!
THERE MUST BE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THOSE UGLY MONSTERS AND THE WOMEN...
HERB! I'VE GOT IT! YOU'VE HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD! HURRY... I HOPE WE'RE NOT TOO LATE!
BUT WHEN WE ARRIVED AT BOB'S HOME...
DEAD! HE'S DEAD, TOO!
HELP ME GET HIS BODY TO OUR BUILDING!
DESPITE HIS WIFE'S VIOLENT OBJECTIONS, HERB AND I REMOVED BOB'S BODY TO OUR OWN PLACE! THEN I SNEAKED OUT OF THE CITY TO OUR ROCKET SHIP AND RETURNED WITH SEVERAL SHEETS OF TRANSPARENT PLASTIC! WITH THEM, I CONSTRUCTED AN ENCLOSURE SOMEWHAT RESEMBLING A SHOWCASE! INTO THIS I PLACED BOB'S BODY...
I DON'T GET IT, GLENN! WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT?
I'VE GOT A HUNCH, HERB! WE'VE JUST GOT TO SIT TIGHT, AND SEE IF I'M RIGHT!
OUR VIGIL BEGAN! WE TOOK FOUR-HOUR SHIFTS WATCHING BOB'S BODY IN THE PLASTIC CASE! THEN ABOUT A WEEK LATER...
GOOD LORD! LOOK! ONE OF THOSE MONSTERS! IT WAS INSIDE THE BODY!
JUST AS I SUSPECTED!
7

WE WATCHED HORRIFIED AS THE HIDEOUS CREATURE FED UPON POOR BOB'S REMAINS! AFTER IT HAD COMPLETELY DONE AWAY WITH THE BODY...
IT'S... IT'S MAKING ONE OF THOSE GLOBE-LIKE THINGS THAT WE SAW IN THE BRANCHES OF THOSE WEIRD TREES WHEN WE FIRST CAME HERE!
YES! SEE HOW IT'S ENCLOSING ITSELF WITHIN IT?

SOON THE MONSTER WAS COMPLETELY ENCASED INSIDE THE SILKY FIBRE-LIKE GLOBE...
WHAT NOW, GLENN?
JUST WATCH AND WAIT, HERB! I'M SURE I'M RIGHT, NOW!

ABOUT A WEEK LATER, THE GLOBE CRACKED OPEN! SOMETHING WAS COMING OUT! A COMPLETE METAMORPHOSIS HAD TAKEN PLACE! INSTEAD OF THE DISGUSTING MONSTER, ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL WOMEN-THINGS EMERGED...
INCREDIBLE! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT, GLENN!
THIS'S THE WHOLE DEAL IN A NUT-SHELL, HERB! FIRST OF ALL, ONE OF THOSE WIZENED LITTLE MALES COULD HAVE COME OUT, TOO! YOU WONDERED WHY THERE'RE NO INSECTS HERE? THERE'S YOUR ANSWER! SHE IS AN INSECT!

SHE SOMEWHAT RESEMBLES EARTH'S BUTTERFLIES OR MOTHS! SHE DEPOSITS HER EGG INSIDE AN ANIMAL, AS THE EARTH MOTH DOES ON A LEAF! THE LARVA THAT HATCHES... IN THIS CASE, A HIDEOUS MONSTER... FEEDS ON THE BODY... AS THE EARTH CATERPILLAR FEEDS ON LEAVES! THEN THE LARVA SPINS THE FIBRE GLOBE OR COCOON ABOUT ITSELF... AND FINALLY EMERGES AS A FULLY DEVELOPED MOTH-WOMAN!

WE DARTED FROM OUR BUILDING... OUT OF THE CITY... AND THROUGH THE JUNGLE TO OUR SHIP...
THAT EXPLAINS THE MEMBRANE-WINGS! THEY'RE VESTIGIAL ORGANS... LIKE MAN'S APPENDIX AND TONSILS!
BUTTERFLIES... IN HUMANOID FORM!

HERB AND I HASTILY PREPARED FOR TAKE-OFF! MEANWHILE, THE LOVELY MOTH-WOMEN HAD GATHERED ABOUT OUR SHIP...
LOOK, GLENN! THEY'RE SORRY WE'RE LEAVING! THEY'RE CRYING!
POOR THINGS! THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY'VE DONE! TO THEM IT WAS A NATURAL THING!

AS OUR ROCKET SHIP HURTLED SKYWARD, LEAVING THE SOBBING HUMAN-BUTTERFLY WOMEN FAR BELOW, HERB TURNED TO ME AND SMILED DRYLY...
YOU KNOW, GLENN! THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I EVER SAW A MOTH BAWL!
OH, NO!
THE END
8

TRANSFORMATION COMPLETED
Wood
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF! I AM EMIL HINDE, M.D., M.S., PH.D.! WHAT I AM ABOUT TO TELL YOU OCCURRED, I REALIZE NOW, BECAUSE OF MY ABNORMAL POSSESSIVENESS TOWARD MY DAUGHTER, TERRY! IT BEGAN ABOUT A YEAR AGO! ONE EVENING, AS I WAS WORKING IN MY LABORATORY...
BUSY, DADDY?
OH! TERRY! COME IN, CHILD! I'M JUST COMPLETING AN EXPERIMENT! I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU!
I EMPTIED THE HYPODERMIC OF ANDROGENES INTO THE FEMALE RABBIT... NOTED THE TIME AND AMOUNT INTO MY LAB BOOK...PLACED THE TREMBLING BALL OF FUR INTO HER CAGE...AND TURNED TO FACE MY DAUGHTER...
WHY, YOU'RE ALL DRESSED UP! GOING SOMEWHERE?
YES! THAT'S WHY I STOPPED IN! TO TELL YOU NOT TO WAIT UP FOR ME! I'M GOING OUT...WITH LEE!
1.

HIM AGAIN? LOOK HERE, TERRY...
PLEASE, DADDY! I'D RATHER NOT DISCUSS IT! I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE LEE! YOU'VE NEVER LIKED ANY MAN I'VE BEEN OUT WITH MORE THAN ONCE!
TERRY WAS RIGHT! EVER SINCE MY WIFE HAD DIED, THE FEAR OF LOSING TERRY THROUGH MARRIAGE HAD HAUNTED ME...
CAN'T YOU REALIZE I'VE GROWN UP... THAT I'M NO LONGER A CHILD... THAT MAYBE I'D LIKE TO... GET MARRIED?
IT...IT'S ONLY THAT I WANT YOU TO MAKE A WISE CHOICE, TERRY!
I LIED TO HER! ACTUALLY I HAD NO INTENTION OF EVER ALLOWING TERRY TO MARRY! I WAS AFRAID OF LONELINESS...
IT'S LATE, DADDY! I HAVE TO BE RUNNING ALONG!
ALL RIGHT, DEAR. HAVE A... NICE TIME!
AFTER TERRY LEFT, I RETURNED TO MY RESEARCH! I DREW A FEMALE RABBIT FROM HER CAGE! A WEEK PREVIOUSLY, I HAD INJECTED ANDROGENES... OR MALE HORMONES... INTO HER BLOOD-STREAM! I EXAMINED THE RABBIT CLOSELY...
HMMM! JUST AS I EXPECTED! THIS FEMALE IS TURNING INTO A MALE!
I HAD BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH THE THEORY THAT THE SEX OF MAMMALS IS DETERMINED IN THE EMBRYO STAGE BY THE SECRETIONS OF THE SEX HORMONES! WHEN THE FEMALE HORMONES OVERBALANCE THE MALE HORMONES, THE EMBRYO DEVELOPS INTO A FEMALE...
...BUT IF MALE HORMONES ARE INJECTED INTO A MATURE FEMALE SO THAT THE BALANCE IS REVERSED, THE MALE CHARACTERISTICS DEVELOP AND THE FEMALE TRAITS SHRIVEL AND DISAPPEAR!
IT WAS MY CONTENTION THAT THE EMBRYO CONTAINED BOTH SEX CHARACTERISTICS! WHEN ONE DEVELOPED, THE OTHER REMAINED DORMANT! BY INJECTING AND REBALANCING THE HORMONES, THE DORMANT CHARACTERISTICS WERE STIMULATED INTO DEVELOPING...
...BUT ONCE THE DORMANT CHARACTERISTICS DEVELOP AND THE ORIGINALLY DEVELOPED CHARACTERISTICS SHRIVEL, NO AMOUNT OF RE-REBALANCING CAN REVERSE THE PROCEDURE AGAIN!
I COMPLETED MY NOTES OF THE DAY'S RESEARCH AND RETIRED TO MY ROOM! THEN I THOUGHT OF TERRY...
I...I'VE GOT TO GET RID OF THIS LEE! TERRY MUSTN'T GET TOO INVOLVED! I'VE GOT TO THINK OF SOMETHING!
2.

I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I SAT THERE IN MY ROOM, BUT SUDDENLY, I WAS SHOCKED OUT OF MY BROODING BY VOICES! I SLIPPED ON A ROBE AND WENT DOWNSTAIRS...
TERRY? THAT YOU?
DADDY! I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE AWAKE! LEE AND I HAVE SUCH WONDERFUL NEWS! TELL HIM, LEE!
WELL, SIR...
LEE'S WORDS LASHED AT ME LIKE A STINGING WHIP...
I'VE ASKED YOUR YOUR DAUGHTER TO MARRY ME!
AND I'VE CONSENTED!
WELL! I...I'M VERY...PLEASED! CONGRATULATIONS... BOTH OF YOU!
I TURNED AWAY! I DIDN'T WANT TERRY TO SENSE MY ANGER! ICY FINGERS GRIPPED MY SPINE! I SAW MYSELF...ALONE...IN THAT BIG HOUSE! SUDDENLY...
A-A-A-CHOO!
GOD BLESS YOU, LEE! OH, DEAR! YOU ARE CATCHING A COLD!
THAT'S THE FOURTH TIME YOU'VE SNEEZED TONIGHT! DADDY? COULD YOU DO SOMETHING FOR LEE?
WHY... YES! I COULD GIVE HIM SOME PENICILLIN!
I HURRIED OFF TO MY LABORATORY! A PLAN... A DESPERATE PLAN... WAS FORMING IN MY MIND...
I'LL GET SOME!
MY, LEE! DADDY MUST LIKE YOU! HE HASN'T PRACTICED MEDICINE FOR YEARS... NOT SINCE HE STARTED HIS RESEARCH!
ONCE IN MY LABORATORY, I PUT A HYPODERMIC IN THE STERILIZER! THEN I REACHED FOR A BOTTLE ON THE SHELF! IT WAS MARKED 'ESTROGENES...FEMALE SEX HORMONES'. I FILLED THE HYPO WITH THE NECESSARY AMOUNT...
THIS WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU...YOUNG MAN! IT WILL BE RATHER DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO MARRY TERRY... WHEN YOU'VE TURNED INTO A WOMAN!
I RETURNED TO THE LIVING ROOM AND MOTIONED LEE TO ROLL UP HIS SLEEVE...
THERE! NOW GO RIGHT HOME AND GET TO BED! TAKE SOME HOT TEA AND BUNDLE UP!
SEE, LEE? DADDY'S REALLY WORRIED ABOUT HIS FUTURE SON-IN-LAW!
3

THAT NIGHT, I ENTERED AN ACCOUNT OF WHAT I HAD DONE TO LEE IN MY LAB NOTEBOOK! THE INJECTION I HAD GIVEN HIM WOULD SERVE TWO PURPOSES! ONE, IT WOULD GET RID OF LEE... AND TWO, IT WOULD FURTHER MY RESEARCH! LEE WAS MY FIRST HUMAN GUINEA PIG! SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER, TERRY CAME HOME CRYING...
TERRY, DARLING! WHAT IS IT?
IT...IT'S LEE, DADDY! WE...WE HAD A FIGHT! IT WAS OVER SUCH A SILLY THING!
'WE WERE DRIVING HOME, WHEN I REMARKED...'
MMMM! YOU CERTAINLY SHAVED CLOSE TONIGHT, LEE! YOUR FACE FEELS SO SMOOTH!
I DIDN'T SHAVE TODAY! I HAVEN'T SHAVED SINCE THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU!
OH, PLEASE, LEE! DON'T JOKE! YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD SUCH A TOUGH BEARD...
DON'T YOU BELIEVE ME? ARE YOU CALLING ME A LIAR? I TOLD YOU...
...AND THEN IT DEVELOPED INTO AN ARGUMENT! OH, DADDY! HE'S ANGRY AT ME FOR DOUBTING HIM!
DON'T WORRY, DEAR! HE'LL GET OVER IT!
IT WAS THE FIRST SIGN THAT THE CHANGE WAS BEGINNING TO TAKE PLACE! LEE'S BEARD... A SECONDARY MALE CHARACTERISTIC...HAD STOPPED GROWING! SOON THE HAIRS WOULD DIE, AND HIS SKIN WOULD BECOME SMOOTH AND SILKY... LIKE A WOMAN'S! I NOTED THE FACT IN MY LAB BOOK! THEN... A WEEK LATER...
SOB... SOB...
WHY, TERRY! ANOTHER ROW WITH LEE? TELL ME ABOUT IT! HOW DID IT HAPPEN?
'LEE ACTED STRANGE TONIGHT! WE WENT OUT WITH ANOTHER COUPLE! ONE OF THEM SUGGESTED...'
HEY! HOW ABOUT DROPPING IN AT THE POOL! THEY'VE GOT THE LIGHTS ON TONIGHT! WE COULD...
NO!
LEE! WHY NOT? I THINK IT WOULD BE FUN!
THEN WHAT HAPPENED, TERRY?
I INSISTED, AND WE HAD ANOTHER FIGHT! LEE WENT HOME! HE LEFT ME FLAT! HE'S GOING TO HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO ME FOR THIS!
4

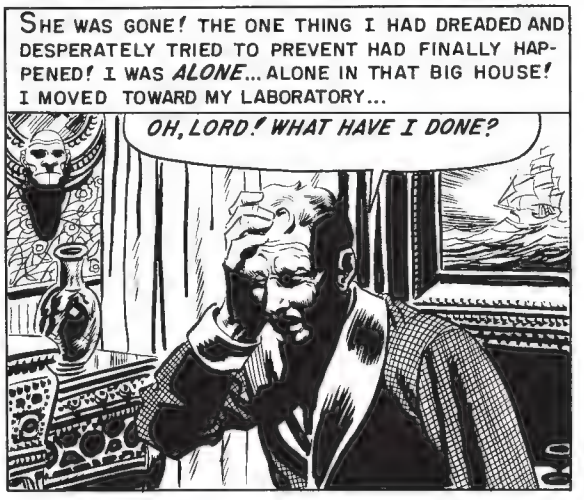
BUT LEE DIDN'T CALL TERRY! A WEEK WENT BY! FINALLY TERRY BROKE DOWN AND CALLED HIS BOARDING HOUSE...
I'M SORRY, TERRY! LEE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE! HE LEFT ABOUT FIVE DAYS AGO! DIDN'T HE TELL YOU?
NO! HE... HE DIDN'T!
TERRY WAS HEARTBROKEN! I COMFORTED HER...
SEE, TERRY? NOW YOU KNOW WHY YOUR FATHER IS SO CONCERNED ABOUT WHO YOU GO WITH!
PLEASE, DADDY! LEAVE ME ALONE!
A MONTH PASSED, BUT STILL NO WORD CAME FROM LEE! TERRY SULKED ABOUT THE HOUSE! I KNEW THAT SHE'D GET OVER HIM IN TIME! THEN, ONE DAY...
WHAT'S THAT, TERRY?
A LETTER... FOR ME! IT'S FROM LEE!
TERRY RAN UP TO HER ROOM HAPPILY! SOON, HOWEVER, SHE CAME DOWNSTAIRS... WHITE AS A GHOST...
TERRY! WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES HE SAY?
HE... HE SAYS HE CAN NEVER MARRY ME... EVER! HE SAYS...
SHE STARED AT ME WIDE-EYED! FOR A FLEETING MOMENT I FELT AS IF TERRY KNEW WHAT I HAD DONE! THEN SHE TURNED AND RAN UPSTAIRS, CRYING. I WENT TO MY LABORATORY, TOOK OUT MY LAB BOOK, AND WROTE...
...TRANSFORMATION COMPLETE!
LATE THAT NIGHT, I WAS AWAKENED FROM A SOUND SLEEP BY A SHARP CRY...
THAT WAS... TERRY! IT CAME FROM DOWNSTAIRS!
EEEEEEK!
I SLIPPED ON MY ROBE AND HURRIED DOWN! THE LIVING ROOM WAS DARK! THERE WAS A LIGHT ON IN MY LABORATORY! I RUSHED IN! TERRY WAS STANDING THERE... STARING AT ME! HER EYES WERE FILLED WITH TEARS! SHE CLUTCHED MY LAB BOOK IN HER ARMS...
TERRY! I... I... GIVE ME THAT!
YOU... YOU... HOW COULD YOU? HOW COULD YOU DO IT TO HIM! YOU FIEND!
5

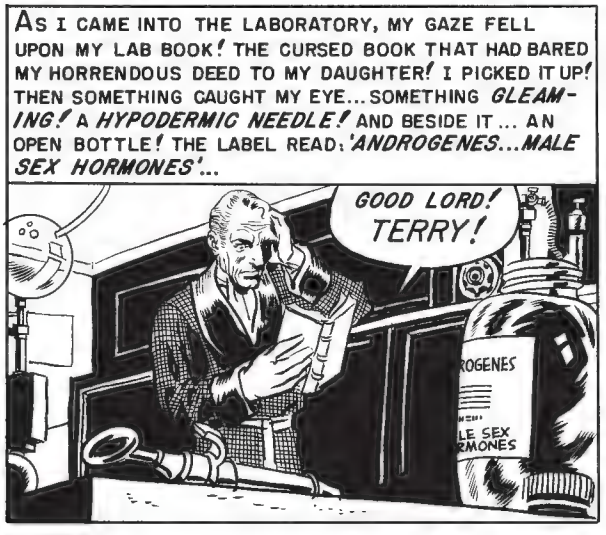
TERRY! WAIT! LET ME EXPLAIN!
I HATE YOU! HATE YOU!

SHE TURNED AND FLED TO HER ROOM! I FOLLOWED! SHE SLAMMED THE DOOR IN MY FACE! I STOOD OUTSIDE LISTENING! I COULD HEAR HER PACKING HER THINGS...
TERRY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TO FIND LEE!

SHE SWUNG OPEN THE DOOR! SHE HAD A SUITCASE IN HER HAND...
BUT TERRY! YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING NOW! WHAT'S DONE IS DONE!
I KNOW! I CAN READ!

TERRY STORMED DOWNSTAIRS AND OUT THE FRONT DOOR! I CRIED AFTER HER...
TERRY! DON'T LEAVE ME! DON'T LEAVE ME!
GOOD-BYE, FATHER!


SHE WAS GONE! THE ONE THING I HAD DREADED AND DESPERATELY TRIED TO PREVENT HAD FINALLY HAPPENED! I WAS ALONE... ALONE IN THAT BIG HOUSE! I MOVED TOWARD MY LABORATORY...
OH, LORD! WHAT HAVE I DONE?


AS I CAME INTO THE LABORATORY, MY GAZE FELL UPON MY LAB BOOK! THE CURSED BOOK THAT HAD BARED MY HORRENDOUS DEED TO MY DAUGHTER! I PICKED IT UP! THEN SOMETHING CAUGHT MY EYE... SOMETHING GLEAMING! A HYPODERMIC NEEDLE! AND BESIDE IT... AN OPEN BOTTLE! THE LABEL READ: 'ANDROGENES... MALE SEX HORMONES'...
GOOD LORD! TERRY!

SEVERAL MONTHS LATER, TERRY WROTE ME! IT WAS A COLD LETTER SIMPLY STATING THAT IF I CARED TO ATTEND THE WEDDING CEREMONY, IT WOULD BE AT SUCH AND SUCH A PLACE AT SUCH AND SUCH A TIME! I WENT! TERRY MADE A VERY HANDSOME GROOM... AND LEE, A LOVELY BRIDE...
THE END
6

THE SECRET OF
SATURN'S RING!
AS THE GLEAMING INTERSOLAR MINERAL-EVALUATION ROCKET SHIP HURLED THROUGH THE VAST EMPTY BLACK VOID OF SPACE TOWARD THE MYSTERIOUS RINGED PLANET, SATURN... ON BOARD, LIEUTENANT HAROLD STINTON GRUMBLED AS HE STUDIED THE VIEW-SCREEN...
SEVEN MONTHS! SEVEN LONG MONTHS... COOPED UP IN THIS SARDINE CAN! OF ALL THE ROTTEN LUCK... PULLING THIS MISERABLE ASSIGNMENT! SATURN... BAH!
AW, QUIT YOUR GRIPING, STINTON! IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE!
Wood

AND THAT'S WORSE? ARE YOU KIDDING? IT TAKES TEN DAYS TO GO THERE...NOT TEN MONTHS...
YES, BUT HALF THE CREW OF THAT EVALUATION TRIP DISAPPEARED AFTER THEY LANDED!

THAT'S RIGHT! I FORGOT! DIDN'T THEY EVER FIND THOSE GUYS? AFTER ALL, TEN MEN CAN'T JUST VANISH OFF THE MOON WITHOUT A TRACE!
WELL, IT HAPPENED! THE REMAINING CREW FINALLY GAVE UP THE SEARCH AFTER TWO WEEKS! THE MEN THAT DISAPPEARED WOULD HAVE RUN OUT OF OXYGEN BEFORE THEN, ANYHOW!

SUDDENLY THE P.A. SYSTEM EXPLODED ABOVE THEIR HEADS...

ATTENTION! ALL HANDS! WE ARE APPROACHING THE OUTER EDGE OF SATURN'S RING! FROM HERE ON THERE WILL BE A CONSTANT DANGER OF COLLISION WITH ANY OF THE BILLIONS OF MOONLETS THAT MAKE UP THE RING! WE ARE GOING TO TRY TO BRING THE SHIP INTO THE SAME ORBIT AND SPEED AS THE MOONLETS!

LIEUTENANT STINTON AND HIS FELLOW OFFICER, LIEUTENANT WARREN GENTRY, WATCHED THEIR VIEW-SCREEN IN AWE AS THE ROCKET SHIP DODGED A FEW STRAY OUTER PLANETOIDS...

IT'S INCREDIBLE! FROM EARTH, THROUGH POWERFUL TELESCOPES, SATURN'S RING LOOKS SOLID! BUT NOW...
...WE CAN SEE THAT THE RING IS MADE UP OF BILLIONS OF VARYING SIZED ROCKS WHIRLING ABOUT THE PLANET!

LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE ROCKET SHIP WAS GUIDED DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO SATURN'S RING! THE TINY MOONLETS WERE ROUND AND SMOOTH FROM CONSTANTLY BUMPING AGAINST EACH OTHER! THE ROAR OF THESE COLLISIONS GOING ON ABOUT THE SHIP WAS DEAFENING...

YOU'D BETTER SHOUT, GENTRY! I CAN'T HEAR YOU ABOVE THIS DIN!
I SAID...IT'S JUST LIKE DRIVING IN TRAFFIC...WITH SUNDAY DRIVERS AROUND TO SIDE-SWIPE YOU!

SOON, THE EARTH-SHIP EMERGED FROM THE RING ONCE MORE AND DREW UP ALONGSIDE AN OUTER MOONLET...

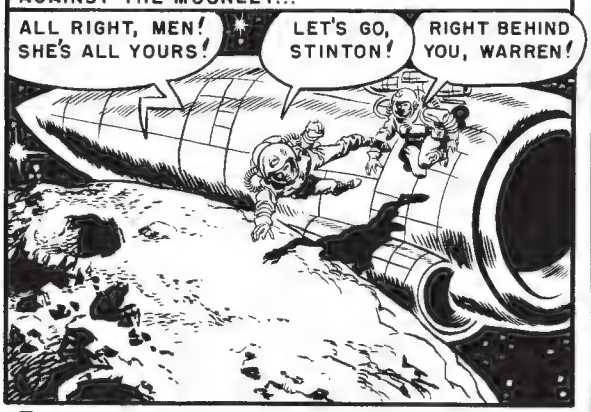
ATTENTION! IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE SATURN MOONLETS ARE ALL GENERALLY ALIKE, SO WE WILL ATTEMPT TO LAND OUR MINERALOGISTS ON THIS OUTER ONE IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY EXAMINE IT CLOSELY!
COME ON, STINTON! THAT'S US! LET'S GET INTO OUR SPACE-SUITS!
2

LIEUTENANT STINTON AND LIEUTENANT GENTRY DRESSED IN THEIR SPACE-SUITS, GATHERED THEIR PORTABLE EQUIPMENT, AND ENTERED THE AIR LOCK...

STINTON AND GENTRY! THIS IS COMMANDER MAXWELL! LISTEN CAREFULLY! THESE ARE YOUR ORDERS! THAT MOONLET OUT THERE IS ABOUT *THREE HUNDRED YARDS IN DIAMETER!* WE'LL PULL UP CLOSE SO THAT YOU CAN GET ONTO HER!

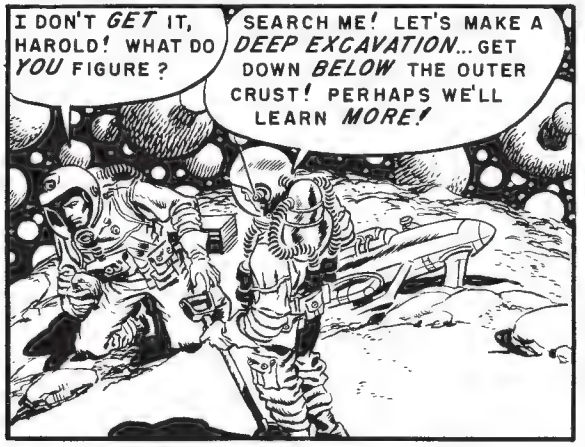
BUT TAKE NO CHANCES! THE *GRAVITATIONAL PULL* OF THIS MOONLET IS PRACTICALLY *NIL!* *WALK CAUTIOUSLY!* ANY *JUMP* OR *PUSH* MIGHT SEND YOU *DRIFTING OFF* INTO SPACE! SINCE TIME IS VALUABLE, WE WILL *LEAVE YOU* WHILE WE PROCEED WITH FURTHER INVESTIGATION! WE WILL BE BACK WITHIN *EIGHT HOURS!*

GENTRY AND STINTON EMERGED FROM THE AIR LOCK ONTO THE HULL OF THE ROCKET SHIP! THERE WAS A SHARP JOLT AS THE CRAFT BUMPED AGAINST THE MOONLET...



THE TWO SPACE-SUIT CLAD MINERALOGISTS SLID TO THE SURFACE OF THE THREE-HUNDRED YARD SPHERE AND WATCHED AS THE SHIP LIFTED AND SPED AWAY...

FOR SEVERAL HOURS, STINTON AND GENTRY CHIPPED SAMPLES FROM THE MOONLET'S SURFACE AND TESTED THEM...


I DON'T *GET* IT, HAROLD! WHAT DO *YOU* FIGURE?
SEARCH ME! LET'S MAKE A *DEEP EXCAVATION*... GET DOWN *BELOW* THE OUTER CRUST! PERHAPS WE'LL LEARN *MORE!*

A DEEP HOLE WAS DUG! SUDDENLY...

EIGHT HOURS LATER, THE ROCKET SHIP RETURNED TO THE MOONLET! BUT GENTRY AND STINTON COULD NOT BE FOUND...

NOT A *TRACE* OF THEM, COMMANDER MAXWELL! WHAT COULD'VE HAPPENED?

LORD KNOWS! PERHAPS ANOTHER MOONLET *HIT* THIS ONE AND KNOCKED THE POOR DEVILS OFF INTO *SPACE!* IN *THAT* EVENT, WE'LL *NEVER* BE ABLE TO FIND THEM!

AFTER SEVERAL HOURS OF SEARCHING FOR THE LOST MEN...

WHAT DO WE DO *NOW,* SIR?

WE'VE *GOT* TO HAVE AN EVALATION OF THE MINERALS IN THESE MOONLETS! WITHOUT STINTON AND GENTRY, AN ACCURATE ANALYSIS WILL BE *IMPOSSIBLE!* THERE'S ONLY ONE THING LEFT TO DO...

...WE'LL HAVE TO BRING ONE OF THESE MOONLETS *BACK TO EARTH WITH US!* WE'LL *TOW* IT WITH OUR *MAGNETIC TRACTOR-RAYS!*

THE MOONLET FROM WHICH STINTON AND GENTRY HAD DISAPPEARED WAS CHOSEN! THE MAGNETIC TRACTOR-RAYS OF THE EARTH-SHIP WERE FOCUSED UPON IT...

MOONLET NOW LOCKED IN TRACTOR-RAY FIELD, COMMANDER!

GOOD! THEN WE CAN BEGIN OUR TRIP HOME!

SLOWLY THE ROCKET SHIP BEGAN GATHERING SPEED...TOWING THE MOONLET ALONG WITH IT...

OUR RETURN TRIP WILL TAKE LONGER THAN OUR TRIP OUT BECAUSE OF THE ADDED DRAG OF THE MOONLET!

I FEEL *TERRIBLE* ABOUT GENTRY AND STINTON! POOR DEVILS...FLOATING AROUND SOMEWHERE OUT THERE...

IT WAS ALMOST A YEAR LATER THAT THE ROCKET SHIP...WITH ITS CAPTIVE MOONLET...DESCENDED GENTLY TO EARTH NEAR LAKE TAHOE, NEVADA...

THERE IT IS, GENERAL! ONE OF THE MOONLETS OF SATURN'S RING! TWO OF MY BEST MEN DISAPPEARED FROM IT... PROBABLY INTO SPACE!

STRANGE! WE LOST *TEN* MEN ON THE MOON TRIP THE *SAME WAY!* JUST *VANISHED*...WITHOUT A TRACE...

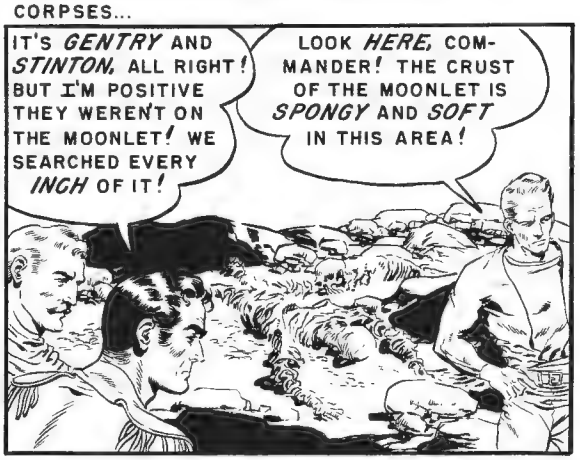
THE ANALYSIS OF THE SATURN MOONLET BEGAN! A GIGANTIC SCAFFOLD WAS BUILT...ENCIRCLING THE HUGE SPHERICAL ROCK! THEN, ONE DAY...

HEY! UP *HERE*...ON *TOP! LOOK!*

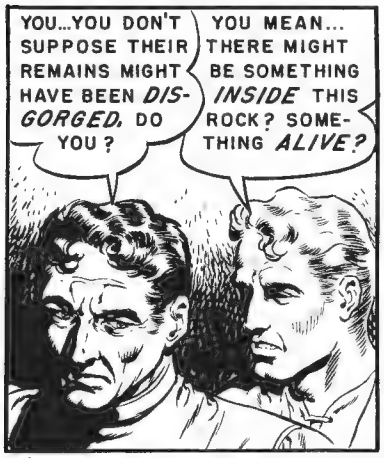
OH, MY GOD! HOW HORRIBLE!

4

COMMANDER MAXWELL IDENTIFIED THE TWO CORPSES...


IT'S GENTRY AND STINTON, ALL RIGHT! BUT I'M POSITIVE THEY WEREN'T ON THE MOONLET! WE SEARCHED EVERY INCH OF IT!
LOOK HERE, COMMANDER! THE CRUST OF THE MOONLET IS SPONGY AND SOFT IN THIS AREA!

COMMANDER MAXWELL STARED AT THE SOFT, SPONGY SECTION OF THE OTHERWISE HARD CRUST OF THE MOONLET...


YOU...YOU DON'T SUPPOSE THEIR REMAINS MIGHT HAVE BEEN DISGORGED, DO YOU?
YOU MEAN... THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING INSIDE THIS ROCK? SOMETHING ALIVE?

COMMANDER MAXWELL BEGAN TO DIG FURIOUSLY INTO THE SOFT SPRINGY SPOT! DEEPER AND DEEPER HE WENT! SUDDENLY...

LOOK! THERE'S SOMETHING OOZING OUT! COVERED WITH A TRANSLUCENT MEMBRANE! COMMANDER MAXWELL!
GOOD LORD! MY LEGS! I'M CAUGHT! HELP ME!
YAAAAAAH!

COMMANDER MAXWELL WAS DRAGGED, SCREAMING IN PAIN, FROM THE OOZING STUFF! HIS LEG...THE ONE THAT HAD BEEN CAUGHT...WAS SHRIVELED LIKE A PRUNE...

THE PULSATING, OOZING MASS BELCHED FROM THE OPENING IN THE MOONLET, SLITHERING AFTER THE FLEEING MEN! TERRIFIED, THEY ACCIDENTALLY DROPPED COMMANDER MAXWELL IN THEIR EFFORT TO ESCAPE! BEFORE THEY COULD RESCUE HIM, HE WAS ENVELOPED BY SUCKING, ROLLING STUFF...

SOON THE STUFF HAD OOZED OUT OVER THE WHOLE TOP OF THE MOONLET! FROM A DISTANCE, THE MINERALOGISTS THAT HAD BEEN EVALUATING THE SPHERE WATCHED..
IT'S SOME SORT OF LIVING ORGANISM...
LIKE AN AMOEBA!
AS THEY WATCHED, THE THING WITHDREW BACK INTO THE MOONLET! A HASTY CONFERENCE WAS CALLED...
WE'VE GOT TO DESTROY IT!
YES! BUT HOW? WHAT IS IT?
ONE OF THE MINERALOGISTS STOOD UP... I KNOW WHAT IT IS! I USED TO DABBLE IN BACTERIOLOGY... AND TOGETHER WITH THE INFORMATION WE'VE ALREADY GATHERED, I'M SURE I'M RIGHT!
THAT MOONLET, GENTLEMEN, IS NO PLANETOID! THAT SPHERE IS A SPORE! AND THE THING INSIDE IT IS A HUGE BACTERIUM!
A SPORE!
OF COURSE! THAT EXPLAINS THE HIGH ORGANIC CONTENT OF THE CRUST... THE LACK OF METALLIC ORES!
YOU MEAN THE MOONLETS IN SATURN'S RING ARE ALL SPORES... CONTAINING BACTERIA?
CORRECT! WHEN BACTERIA ARE SUBJECTED TO UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS, THEY FORM HARD CRUSTS ABOUT THEMSELVES, THEREBY BECOMING SPORES! THAT'S WHAT PROBABLY HAPPENED ON SATURN...
WELL, HOW CAN YOU DESTROY A BACTERIUM OR SPORE?
IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO DESTROY A SPORE! IF WE COULD GET THE BACTERIUM OUT OF ITS SPORE-CASE, THE USUAL METHODS OF STERILIZATION COULD WORK... CARBOLIC ACID OR BOILING WATER...
THEN WE'LL FORCE THE THING FROM ITS SPORE-CASE!
HOW?
WE'LL BLAST THE CASE FROM AROUND IT!
6

PLANS WERE MADE! A SERIES OF DYNAMITE CHARGES WERE PLACED IN A LINE AROUND THE CRUST OF THE SPHERE...
WHEN THESE CHARGES ARE SET OFF, THE SPORE-CASE WILL SPLIT IN TWO!
THIRTEEN FIRE TRUCKS SURROUNDED THE SPHERE, EACH LOADED WITH CARBOLIC ACID...
WHEN THE SHELL OF THE SPORE FALLS AWAY, START SPRAYING THE THING WITH THE ACID...
EVERYTHING WAS READY! THE SECONDS TICKED OFF... SIX... FIVE... FOUR... THREE... TWO... ONE...
NOW!
HERE GOES!
THERE WAS A DEAFENING EXPLOSION...
...AND THE HUGE MOONLET SPLIT, THE CRUST-HALVES FALLING AWAY, EXPOSING THE ENTIRE GIGANTIC BACTERIUM...
START SPRAYING!
THE HUGE MASS OF LIVING OOZE SLITHERED AWAY FROM THE STREAMS OF CARBOLIC ACID THAT WERE POURED UPON IT...
THE ACID IS JUST DISSOLVING THE SURFACE! IT ISN'T ENOUGH TO KILL IT!
IT'S HEADED TOWARD ONE OF THE TRUCKS! LOOK OUT!
SUCKING AND GULPING, THE REPULSIVE BACTERIUM ENGULFED THE TRUCK, ABSORBING THE UNFORTUNATE OCCUPANTS...
AAAAAAAAGH!
EEEEEEEEE!
7

SLOWLY IT SLID AWAY, FINALLY PLUNGING INTO NEARBY LAKE TAHOE...
IT'S IN THE LAKE! NOW WHAT?
WE'VE GOT TO USE THE OTHER METHOD...BOILING WATER!
HOW CAN WE HEAT THE WATER IN THE LAKE TO ITS BOILING POINT?
SIMPLE!
YOU KNOW HOW A VAPORIZOR WORKS...THE GADGET YOU USE WHEN YOU HAVE A COLD? YOU SALT THE WATER AND SEND A CURRENT OF ELECTRICITY THROUGH IT!
TONS OF SALT WERE POURED INTO LAKE TAHOE! A HUGE ALTERNATING CURRENT GENERATOR WAS BROUGHT TO ITS SHORE! TWO LARGE BLOCKS OF GRAPHITE...EACH WIRED TO ONE OF THE TERMINALS OF THE GENERATOR...WERE SUBMERGED IN THE LAKE...
EVERYTHING'S SET! TURN ON THE CURRENT!
SOON THE ENTIRE LAKE BEGAN TO BUBBLE AND BOIL! HUGE CLOUDS OF STEAM ROSE FROM ITS TOSSING SURFACE...
IF THIS DOESN'T KILL IT, NOTHING WILL!
BUT WHEN THE LAKE HAD COMPLETELY BOILED AWAY, ON THE PARCHED AND CRACKED BOTTOM LAY A LARGE HARD-CRUSTED SPHERE...
IT FORMED A SPORE AGAIN!
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO! TOW IT BACK TO SATURN!
I'VE JUST COME FROM HEADQUARTERS! THEY RECEIVED A NEWS-FLASH...FROM THE MOON! A SEARCHING PARTY FOUND TEN BODIES...DRIED UP LIKE PRUNES!
THE SCIENTISTS STARED AT EACH OTHER...
OUR MOON IS A SPORE, TOO!
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER PLANETS IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM? ALL OF THEIR MOONS MUST BE SPORES!
PERHAPS THE PLANETS ARE SPORES, ALSO! PERHAPS EARTH ITSELF IS ONE HUGE SPORE ENCASING A DORMANT GIANT BACTERIUM!
THE END
EDITOR'S NOTE: PLANNING TO DRILL FOR OIL, ANYONE ?
8

the Mutants!

ENIWETOK...JULY...1952! THIS WAS THE *BEGINNING!* THIS WAS WHERE IT *ALL STARTED!* THIS WAS THE *DEBUT* OF THE LONG AWAITED *HYDROGEN BOMB!* AS THE GATHERED OFFICIALS WATCHED FROM VANTAGE POINTS ABOARD NAVY SHIPS, A SIGNAL WAS GIVEN... A SWITCH WAS THROWN... AND THE SUN WAS BLEACHED OUT BY AN EVER SO MUCH BRIGHTER FLASH! THEN A TREMENDOUS CLOUD OF RADIOACTIVE SMOKE AND BURNING GASES ROSE UPWARD... UNTIL IT REACHED AN ALTITUDE OF FIVE MILES... DWARFING THE ANCHORED SHIPS BELOW! *THE FIRST HYDROGEN BOMB HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY DETONATED...*

THEN, LESS THAN A YEAR LATER, THEY STARTED TO APPEAR! *THE MUTANTS!* THE FIRST WAS BORN TO THE WIFE OF A SAILOR WHO HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE ENIWETOK EXPERIMENT...

THE BIRTH OF THE *FIRST ONE* WAS DISMISSED AS AN UNFORTUNATE OCCURRENCE! NO ONE SUSPECTED ITS CONNECTION WITH THE HYDROGEN BOMB DETONATION! THEN, ABOUT TWO WEEKS LATER, THE *SECOND MUTANT* ARRIVED! THE FATHER WAS A SENATOR WHO'D WITNESSED THE BLAST...

TAKE IT AWAY! TAKE IT AWAY! I DON'T WANT TO *LOOK* AT IT!
BUT, SARAH! THAT'S *OUR SON!*
YOU'D BETTER DO AS SHE ASKS, NURSE!
YES, DOCTOR!
WOOD '57
1

THE THIRD ONE'S FATHER WAS AN ATOMIC SCIENTIST WHO'D BEEN THERE...
GOOD LORD! WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT, DOCTOR?
ONCE IN A WHILE THESE THINGS HAPPEN! I... I'M SORRY...
THE FOURTH MUTANT'S MOTHER HAD BEEN A NAVY NURSE ... AT ENIWETOK...
OH, GOD! WHAT DID I EVER DO TO DESERVE...
TAKE IT EASY, HONEY! DOCTORS KNOW THEIR STUFF THESE DAYS! PERHAPS.. PLASTIC SURGERY..
AFTER THE THIRTY-SECOND MUTANT WAS BORN, SOMEONE STARTED AN INVESTIGATION...
THAT'S WHAT THEY ARE! ATOMIC MUTANTS! AT LEAST ONE PARENT OF EACH OF THEM WAS AT ENIWETOK WHEN THE HYDROGEN BOMB WAS EXPLODED!
GET ME A LIST OF ALL PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO ENIWETOK FOR THAT TEST!
TWO DAYS LATER...
HERE YOU ARE, SIR! THERE WERE FOUR THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND NINE WITNESSES TO THE ENIWETOK TEST! TWENTY-TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-ONE ARE MARRIED! OF THESE, ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND TWENTY ARE NOW SEPARATED FROM SERVICE OR LIVING WITH THEIR WIVES OR HUSBANDS!
WE'VE GOT TO WORK FAST! TWO MORE MUTANTS WERE BORN LAST NIGHT! SEND OUT TELE-GRAMS... EXPLAIN THE SITUATION TO THESE PEOPLE!
BUT THE DAMAGE HAD BEEN DONE! BY THE TIME THOSE WHO HAD BEEN AT ENIWETOK HAD BEEN FOUND... WARNED... AND TREATED, SEVENTY-THREE MUTANTS HAD BEEN BORN...
...AND OUR LATEST FIGURES SHOW FORTY-FIVE MORE ARE EXPECTED!
THOSE POOR PEOPLE! I SAW ONE OF THOSE MUTANTS TODAY! UGHH!
BY 1962, THE MUTANT POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES HAD REACHED A TOTAL OF ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-NINE...
ALL RIGHT, MISS PRINKLE! JUST WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?
IT'S HOWARD GABOR, THAT MUTANT CHILD! HE'S NINE NOW, BUT... SO HELP ME... HE HAS THE INTELLIGENCE OF AN ADULT! I THINK HE SHOULD BE TAKEN OUT OF MY CLASS AND...
ARE YOU SURE, MISS PRINKLE, THAT YOU AREN'T ALLOWING THIS POOR UNFORTUNATE BOY'S PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS TO COLOR YOUR WISHES IN THIS MATTER?
WHY, MR. KELLEY! HOW DARE YOU! THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT! THE BOY HAS SUPERIOR INTELLIGENCE!
2

IT WAS TRUE! AS THE STRANGE ATOMIC MUTANTS MATURED, THEY SHOWED DEFINITE TRAITS OF EXTREME INTELLIGENCE! AT THE GRADUATION EXERCISES OF A RENOUNED EASTERN UNIVERSITY...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE THE STUDENT WHO *LEADS* THE CLASS OF '68 WITH AN *ACADEMIC AVERAGE OF NINETY NINE POINT FOUR... FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD HOWARD GABOR!*

HOWARD GABOR, ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S TWO HUNDRED AND TWELVE ATOMIC MUTANTS, MOUNTED THE STEPS TO THE ROSTRUM TO RECEIVE HIS DIPLOMA! THERE WAS SOME SCATTERED HALF-HEARTED APPLAUSE... COUPLED WITH GASPS FROM THE AUDIENCE...

BY 1975, THE MUTANT POPULATION HAD HIT TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY FIVE! MANY OF THEM HAD BECOME SUCCESSFUL PHYSICISTS, CHEMISTS, DOCTORS, ETC.! SOME HAD ENTERED POLITICS! DESPITE THEIR ABNORMAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS, THEY WERE RESPECTED FOR THEIR TALENTS, INTELLIGENCE AND SINCERITY...

...AND IN NEW YORK CITY, JOHN BURKLY, AN *ATOMIC MUTANT,* HAS BEEN ELECTED TO THE *HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES* IN WASHINGTON D.C.!

WITH THEIR SUPERIOR MINDS, MANY MUTANTS BECAME LEADING INDUSTRIALISTS...

BUT IN THE OFFICE OF A LEADING JET-MOBILE MANUFACTURER...

WE'VE GOT TO *DO* SOMETHING! THAT *MUTANT'S CAR* WILL BE *CHEAPER* THAN OURS... AND *BETTER!* HE'LL *RUIN US!* ALREADY, MANY OF OUR WORKERS HAVE QUIT TO WORK FOR *HIM!* HE *PAYS* MORE!
IF WE DON'T *WATCH OURSELVES,* THOSE MONSTERS WILL TAKE OVER *EVERYTHING!*

AND SO, IN THE INFAMOUS "SMOKE-FILLED ROOMS"...

YES! THAT'S WHAT I *SAID!* WE'VE GOT TO *GET RID OF 'EM!* THEY ARE TOO *SMART* FOR US! IF WE DON'T ACT *SOON,* WE'LL BE *OUT... ON OUR EARS!*
MY *CAR BUSINESS* HAS FALLEN OFF *FIFTY PERCENT!*
THERE'S TALK OF *ONE* OF THEM RUNNING FOR THE *SENATE!*
3

SOON A CAMPAIGN BEGAN... A CAMPAIGN OF HATE...
DO YOU WANT YOUR DAUGHTERS MARRYING THESE ATOMIC ATROCITIES? DO YOU WANT YOUR GRAND-CHILDREN TO LOOK LIKE THIS?
NO!
NO!
SPEECHES WERE MADE! WELL-TIMED, WELL-DELIVERED SPEECHES...
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'LL DO? THEY'LL COME IN HERE! THEY'LL TAKE OVER YOUR JOBS! THEY'RE SMART! DO YOU WANT 'EM STEALIN' YOUR JOBS!
LET'S GET RID OF 'EM!
YEAH!
YOU SAID IT!
ANTI-MUTANT FEELING RAN HIGH...
I SAY, LET'S PUT 'EM ALL IN SPACE SHIPS AND SEND 'EM TO ANOTHER PLANET! KICK 'EM OUT!
THE CAMPAIGN OF HATE WAS SUCCESSFUL! AIDED BY THE WIDE-SPREAD HYSTERIA, LEGISLATION WAS PUSHED THROUGH CONGRESS! THEN...
CAN'T I EVEN HAVE A FEW MOMENTS TO COLLECT MY BELONGINGS?
SHUT UP AND GET MOVING!
OUT IN THE NEW MEXICAN DESERT, TWO HUGE SPACE SHIPS WERE READIED FOR THE MUTANTS...
BUT WHERE WILL THEY GO?
WHO CARES? ANYWHERE... JUST SO LONG AS WE'RE RID OF 'EM.
WHEN THE LAST OF THE ATOMIC MUTANTS WERE HERDED ABOARD THE ROCKET SHIPS...
THAT'S ALL OF THEM!
CLEAR THE AREA! GET READY FOR THE TAKE-OFFS!
THE TWO ROCKET SHIPS ROSE SLOWLY...ONE AFTER THE OTHER... INTO THE BLACK VOID OF SPACE, LEAVING AN ANGRY EARTH BELOW...
GOOD RIDDANCE!
4

IN EACH OF THE MUTANT ROCKETS, THE OCCUPANTS GATHERED BEFORE THEIR RESPECTIVE INTER-SHIP COMMUNICATION SCREENS, TO DISCUSS THEIR PROBLEM...
WELL, BAKER? YOU'RE AN ASTROPHYSICIST! WHERE DO YOU SUGGEST WE SET OUR COURSE FOR?
OUT OF THIS SOLAR SYSTEM! WE'LL FIND A PLANET SOMEWHERE!
THE MUTANTS HELD NO MALICE TOWARD THEIR EXILERS BACK ON EARTH...
THEY CAN'T BE BLAMED FOR WHAT THEY DID! THEY'RE LIKE CHILDREN!
POOR, INNOCENT FOOLS! THEY DIDN'T KNOW WE WERE JUST TRYING TO HELP THEM!
MEANWHILE, BACK ON EARTH, AT A FAMOUS OBSERVATORY...
GOOD LORD!
WHAT IS IT, CARL? WHAT DO YOU SEE?
A METEOR HAS ENTERED OUR SOLAR SYSTEM! UNLESS SOMETHING CAN BE DONE, THE EARTH IS DOOMED! IT'S HEADED STRAIGHT TOWARD US!
WHILE OUT IN SPACE, IN THE MUTANT ROCKET SHIPS...
YES! I SEE IT! IT'S A METEOR! AND IT'S HEADED TOWARD EARTH!
IF IT HITS EARTH, WILL IT DESTROY IT?
NO! IT'S NOT THAT BIG! BUT IT CAN WREAK HAVOC... CAUSE EARTHQUAKES AND TIDAL WAVES! MILLIONS WILL LOSE THEIR LIVES!
IT'LL BE PASSING US IN A DAY OR SO!
BACK ON EARTH, THE PEOPLE WERE THROWN INTO A PANIC BY THE NEWS OF THE IMMINENT DISASTER...
THE METEOR IS NOW ABOUT THREE MILLION MILES AWAY! IT IS HEADED RIGHT AT US! ONLY A MIRACLE CAN SAVE EARTH!
EEEEEEEEEE!
GOD HELP US!
5

ON ONE OF THE ROCKET SHIPS...

ARE YOU *SURE*, BAKER?

ABSOLUTELY! IF ONE OF OUR SHIPS WERE TO CRASH *INTO* THAT METEOR, THE FORCE WOULD *SHIFT* ITS COURSE JUST ENOUGH SO THAT IT WOULD *MISS* EARTH!

WE FEEL THAT *OUR* SHIP SHOULD BE THE ONE TO DO IT, BAKER!

WELL, THE BOYS *HERE* FEEL THE SAME WAY! I'LL FLIP A COIN...YOU CALL!

AND SO, AS ANXIOUS EYES BACK ON EARTH WATCHED THROUGH POWERFUL ELECTRONIC TELE-SCOPES, ONE OF THE MUTANT ROCKETS TURNED TOWARD THE BLAZING METEOR...

...AND CRASHED DIRECTLY INTO IT...EXPLODING IN A BURST OF MOLTEN METAL AND INCANDESCENT GASES...

THUS THE EARTH WAS SAVED! THE FLAMING METEOR STREAKED HARMLESSLY BY, BEYOND ITS GRAVITATIONAL FIELD...

THANK GOD!

THE *MUTANTS!* THEY SAVED US! THE *OCCUPANTS* OF ONE OF THEIR SHIPS *SACRIFICED THEMSELVES* FOR US!

BRING THE OTHERS BACK! WE OWE THE MUTANTS OUR LIVES!

THE PEOPLE OF EARTH PLEADED WITH THE MUTANTS IN THE REMAINING SHIP TO RETURN! WHEN THE ROCKET ARRIVED, ITS OCCUPANTS WERE GREETED BY WILDLY CHEERING CROWDS...

...AND FINALLY...LET ME EXPRESS OUR *INTENSE GRATITUDE* TO YOU ALL FOR *SAVING US FROM DESTRUCTION!* WE ONLY *PRAY* THAT YOU WILL *FORGIVE* US FOR OUR THOUGHTLESS STUPIDITY IN *EXILING* YOU!

IT TOOK A NEAR-CATASTROPHE, AND THE HORRIBLE DEATHS OF HALF OF US... BUT MAYBE NOW THE *'CHILDREN'* HAVE *GROWN UP!*

THE WELCOME RETURNEES WERE ACCEPTED EVERY-WHERE! THEY RESUMED THEIR INTERRUPTED CAREERS AS DOCTORS...SCIENTISTS...INDUSTRIALISTS! BUT, UNLIKE THE ELEPHANT, *MAN FORGETS EASILY!* AND IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE...

CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT THEY'RE *DOING?* THEY'RE *TAKING OVER YOUR JOBS!* THEY'RE *SMART!* ARE YOU GOING TO STAND FOR THAT... *STEALIN' YOUR JOBS?*

NO! LET'S GET *RID* OF *'EM!*

WITH THE MUTANTS!

THE END

6

THE CONQUERORS OF THE MOON!

THIS STORY HAS ITS BEGINNING ON THAT DAY, NOT TOO FAR IN THE DISTANT FUTURE, WHEN THE *FIRST ROCKET SHIP*... FINANCED AND BUILT BY *PRIVATE CAPITAL*... REACHED EARTH'S DEAD SATELLITE, THE MOON! THIS HUGE, EXPENSIVE PROJECT WAS UNDERTAKEN BY A PRIVATE ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS *THE URANIUM-DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION!* AS THE GLEAMING GIANT CAME TO REST UPON THE MOON'S COLD, BARREN LANDSCAPE, A DOOR SWUNG OPEN AND A SPACE-SUIT CLAD SCIENTIST...THE FIRST EARTHMAN EVER TO SET FOOT UPON THE MOON... DESCENDED TO ITS SURFACE, WEDGED A STAKE INTO A LAVA FISSURE, AND ANNOUNCED...

I CLAIM THIS *ENTIRE SATELLITE*... EVERY SQUARE FOOT OF IT... AS THE *SOLE* AND *RIGHTFUL PROPERTY* OF *THE URANIUM-DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION!*
WALLACE WOOD
THUS, THE MOON, WITH ITS WEALTH OF UNTAPPED NATURAL RESOURCES, BECAME THE PRIVATE PROPERTY OF A PRIVATELY OWNED COMPANY! FIVE YEARS LATER, IN THE HOME OFFICES OF THE URANIUM-DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, R.M. LAMONT, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, ADDRESSED A STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING...
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! DUE TO A RECENT DEVELOPMENT, IT BECAME NECESSARY FOR ME TO CALL THIS EMERGENCY MEETING! BUT FIRST, BEFORE I ANNOUNCE THE IMPORTANT NEWS, I WOULD LIKE TO REVIEW U.D.'S HISTORY DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS! IF SOMEONE WILL SWITCH OFF THE LIGHTS...

THE LIGHTS WERE TURNED OFF, AND THE ROOM WAS THROWN INTO DARKNESS! THEN A MOTOR BEGAN TO HUM...AND A BRILLIANT COLORED MOTION PICTURE WAS FLASHED ON A GIGANTIC SCREEN...

THIS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WAS WHAT U.D. FOUND WHEN IT FIRST REACHED THE MOON FIVE YEARS AGO! A BARREN...COLD...DESOLATE... UNINHABITABLE BODY!

'UPON CLAIMING THE MOON AS U.D.'S PROPERTY, YOU'LL REMEMBER WE SET OFF AN INTERNATIONAL UPROAR! HERE WE SEE THE WORLD COURT WHEN IT MADE ITS MOMENTOUS DECISION IN U.D.'S BEHALF...

...AND IT IS THE DECISION OF THIS WORLD COURT OF JUSTICE THAT SINCE THE FIRST HUMAN TO SET FOOT UPON THE MOON WAS A *REPRESENTATIVE* OF THE *URANIUM-DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION*...AND SINCE THE ENTIRE PROJECT WAS *FINANCED* BY THIS CORPORATION... THEIR LEGAL OWNERSHIP OF THE MOON *CANNOT BE CONTESTED!*

'THE WAY WAS CLEAR FOR U.D. TO GO AHEAD WITH ITS PLANS! HERE WE SEE THE FIRST SHAFT BEING SUNK INTO THE ROCKY SURFACE OF THE MOON IN PREPARATION FOR BUILDING LIVING QUARTERS...'

'YOU WILL NOTICE THE DIFFICULTY OF WORKING IN THE CUMBERSOME SPACE-SUITS WHICH HAD TO BE WORN...'

'BUT AT LAST, LIVING QUARTERS WERE HEWN UNDER THE CRUST OF THE MOON, AND OXYGEN-GENERATING MACHINES INSTALLED! OUR WORKERS WERE ABLE TO MOVE ABOUT WITHOUT WEARING SPACE-SUITS...'

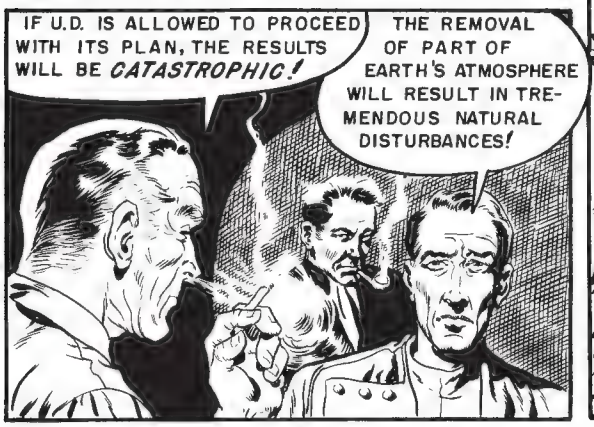
'ALTHOUGH THE LIVING QUARTERS WERE UNDERGROUND, THE LOCATING AND MINING OF URANIUM-PRODUCING ORE HAD TO BE CONDUCTED OUTSIDE, ON THE SURFACE! HERE WE SEE ONE OF U.D.'S MINERALOGISTS TRACING URANIUM ORE WITH A GEIGER-MULLER COUNTER...'

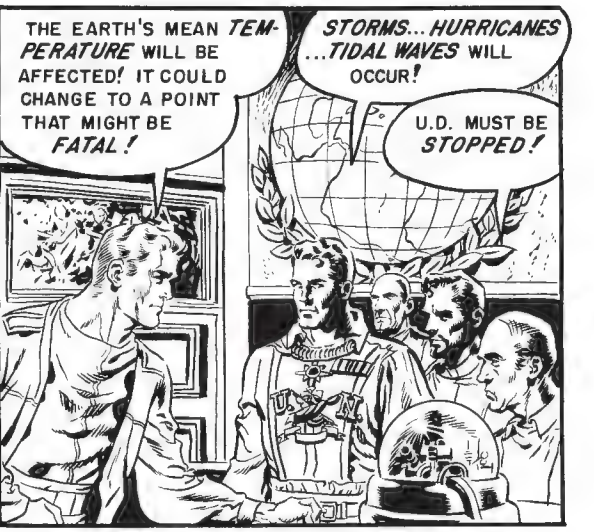
'AND HERE, AN OPEN-PIT MINE! NOTICE THE MACHINE IN THE BACKGROUND HAS BOGGED DOWN DUE TO THE INTENSE COLD...'

2

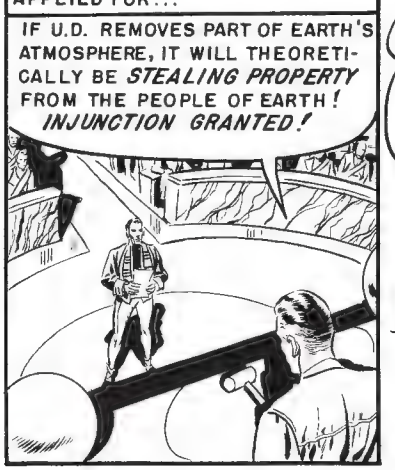
THE LIGHTS IN THE MEETING ROOM BLINKED ON, AND MR. LAMONT CONTINUED...
THESE, THEN, HAVE BEEN OUR GREATEST DIFFICULTIES... THE INTENSE EXTREMES IN TEMPERATURE WHICH OUR MACHINERY CANNOT WITHSTAND, AND THE FACT THAT SPACE-SUITS MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES EXCEPT IN THE LIVING QUARTERS!
TO BE QUITE FRANK, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, ALTHOUGH U.D. OWNS THE MOON, IT HAS NOT BEEN, UP TO NOW, A PROFITABLE VENTURE FOR US! THE AMOUNT OF ORE WE MINE AND TRANSPORT BACK TO EARTH DOESN'T COVER THE COST OF OBTAINING IT!
WELL, THEN, MISTER CHAIRMAN! WHAT'S YOUR SOLUTION?
URANIUM-DEV
THE SOLUTION, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IS THAT WE MUST GIVE THE MOON AN ATMOSPHERE!
WHAT?
IMPOSSIBLE!
HOW CAN WE MANUFACTURE AN ATMOSPHERE?
U. D. WILL NOT MANUFACTURE AN ATMOSPHERE, FRIENDS! IT WILL TRANSPORT A SMALL PART OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE TO THE MOON!
WE WILL DO THIS BY THE USE OF A NEW AND REVOLUTIONARY METHOD... RECENTLY DEVELOPED IN U.D.'S LABORATORIES... CALLED TELEPORTATION!
ALTHOUGH THIS IS TOO TECHNICAL AN OPERATION TO EXPLAIN IN DETAIL, I SHALL ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE TELEPORTATION IN SIMPLE TERMS! BY TRANSFORMING MATTER INTO ENERGY. WE ARE ABLE TO TRANSMIT THIS ENERGY IN A MANNER SIMILAR TO THAT IN WHICH SOUND IS TRANSMITTED BY RADIO WAVES! THE ENERGY IS THEN RECEIVED AND REFORMED INTO THE ORIGINAL MATTER!
MATTER
TRANS-FORMER
TRANS-MITTER
RECEIVER
MATTER RE-ASSEMBLED
TELE
TRANS
U.D. HAS SUCCESSFULLY BUILT AND TESTED A TELEPORTATION TRANSMITTER AND RECEIVER! THE RECEIVER IS NOW, AT THIS VERY MINUTE, BEING SET UP ON THE MOON! BY TELEPORTING AN ATMOSPHERE THERE, SPACE-SUITS WILL NOT BE NECESSARY, AND CONDITIONS SIMILAR TO THOSE HERE ON EARTH WILL BE ESTABLISHED!
3

THE NEWS THAT THE URANIUM-DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION PLANNED TO TELEPORT A SMALL PORTION OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE TO THE MOON SET OFF A STORM OF CONTROVERSY...


IF U.D. IS ALLOWED TO PROCEED WITH ITS PLAN, THE RESULTS WILL BE *CATASTROPHIC!*
THE REMOVAL OF PART OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE WILL RESULT IN TREMENDOUS NATURAL DISTURBANCES!


THE EARTH'S MEAN *TEMPERATURE* WILL BE AFFECTED! IT COULD CHANGE TO A POINT THAT MIGHT BE *FATAL!*
STORMS... HURRICANES ...TIDAL WAVES WILL OCCUR!
U.D. MUST BE *STOPPED!*

AN INJUNCTION, RESTRAINING U.D. FROM COMPLETING ITS PLAN, WAS APPLIED FOR...


IF U.D. REMOVES PART OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, IT WILL THEORETICALLY BE *STEALING PROPERTY* FROM THE PEOPLE OF EARTH! *INJUNCTION GRANTED!*

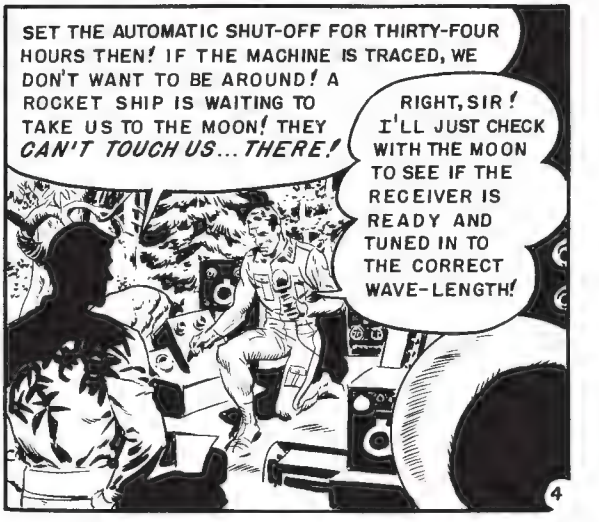
MR. LAMONT CONSULTED WITH U.D'S LEGAL STAFF...

IT'S A *TRICK*, R.M.! I DON'T SEE HOW REMOVING 300 MILLION CUBIC MILES OF ATMOSPHERE FROM EARTH'S TOTAL OF 22 BILLION CUBIC MILES WILL DO ANY HARM!
WHY NOT DO IT *SECRETLY?*

CONVINCED THAT U.D.'S COMPETITORS HAD INSTIGATED THE INJUNCTION, R.M. LAMONT ORDERED THE TELEPORTATION TRANSMITTER TO BE SHIPPED TO A SECRET LOCATION...

YES! THAT'S RIGHT. *IMMEDIATELY.* WE'RE GOING AHEAD WITH OUR PLANS *DESPITE* THE INJUNCTION! BE SURE YOU TAKE ALONG A *GENERATOR* FOR *POWER!*
UD

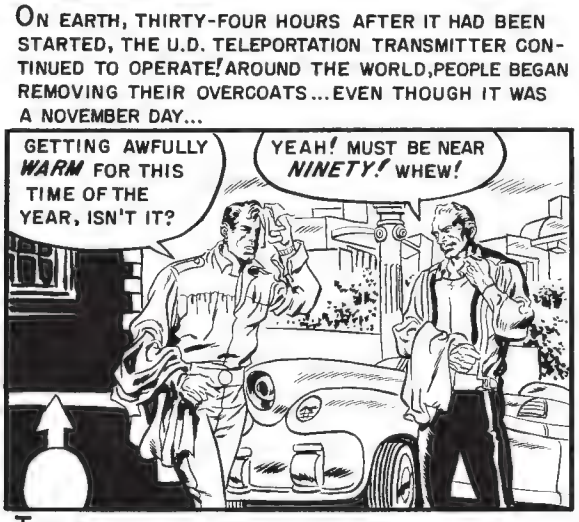
THE U.D. TELEPORTATION TRANSMITTER WAS SECRETED SOMEWHERE IN THE CANADIAN NORTH WOODS...


SET THE AUTOMATIC SHUT-OFF FOR THIRTY-FOUR HOURS THEN! IF THE MACHINE IS TRACED, WE DON'T WANT TO BE AROUND! A ROCKET SHIP IS WAITING TO TAKE US TO THE MOON! THEY *CAN'T TOUCH US... THERE!*
RIGHT, SIR! I'LL JUST CHECK WITH THE MOON TO SEE IF THE RECEIVER IS READY AND TUNED IN TO THE CORRECT WAVE-LENGTH!
4

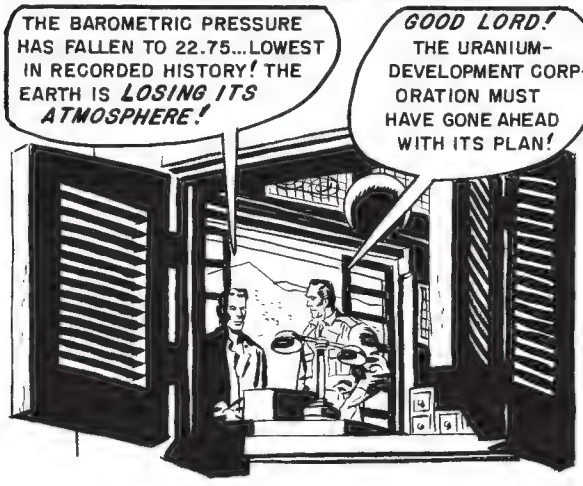
AND SO, THE TELEPORTATION TRANSMITTER WAS TURNED ON... AND THE AUTOMATIC SHUT-OFF WAS SET FOR THIRTY-FOUR HOURS...
IT'S STARTED!
LET'S GO!

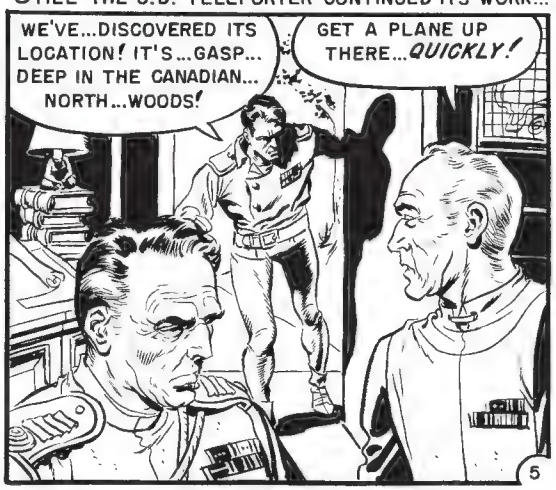
SOMEWHERE IN CANADA, SEVERAL HOURS LATER, A ROCKET SHIP ROSE... STREAKING SKYWARD... CARRYING R.M. LAMONT TO HIS MOON EMPIRE...

AS THE U.D. SHIP STREAKED THROUGH SPACE...
MOON RADIOS ATMOSPHERE COMING THROUGH FINE, MR. LAMONT!
GOOD! I WONDER WHAT'S HAPPENING BACK HOME!


ON EARTH, THIRTY-FOUR HOURS AFTER IT HAD BEEN STARTED, THE U.D. TELEPORTATION TRANSMITTER CONTINUED TO OPERATE! AROUND THE WORLD, PEOPLE BEGAN REMOVING THEIR OVERCOATS... EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A NOVEMBER DAY...
GETTING AWFULLY WARM FOR THIS TIME OF THE YEAR, ISN'T IT?
YEAH! MUST BE NEAR NINETY! WHEW!

AND THAT NIGHT, WHILE THE TRANSMITTER WENT ON FUNCTIONING, PEOPLE BEGAN FINDING IT HARD TO BREATHE...
GASP... I... GASP... CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT! I... FEEL LIKE I JUST RAN... A... MILE!
AND IT... IT'S... SO COLD TONIGHT! IT MUST BE... GASP... BELOW ZERO!


THE INTERNATIONAL WEATHER BUREAU REPORTED...
THE BAROMETRIC PRESSURE HAS FALLEN TO 22.75... LOWEST IN RECORDED HISTORY! THE EARTH IS LOSING ITS ATMOSPHERE!
GOOD LORD! THE URANIUM-DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MUST HAVE GONE AHEAD WITH ITS PLAN!


STILL THE U.D. TELEPORTER CONTINUED ITS WORK...
WE'VE... DISCOVERED ITS LOCATION! IT'S... GASP... DEEP IN THE CANADIAN... NORTH... WOODS!
GET A PLANE UP THERE... QUICKLY!
5

A BOMBER WAS FUELED AND READIED! BUT...WHEN IT ATTEMPTED TO LEAVE THE GROUND...

THE ATMOSPHERE HAD THINNED TO A POINT WHERE FLYING WAS IMPOSSIBLE! SOON, PEOPLE BEGAN TO SUFFOCATE...

MEANWHILE, THE U.D. SPACE-SHIP REACHED THE MOON...

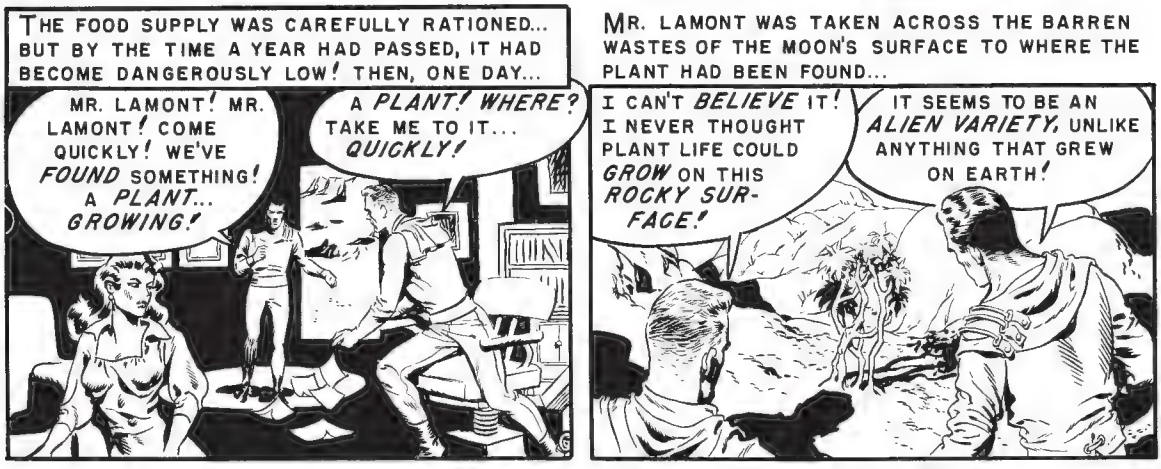
WHAT? THE EARTH HAS LOST ITS ATMOSPHERE? BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
THE SHUT-OFF SWITCH JAMMED! WE TRIED TO CONTACT YOU... BUT YOU DIDN'T ANSWER!
U D

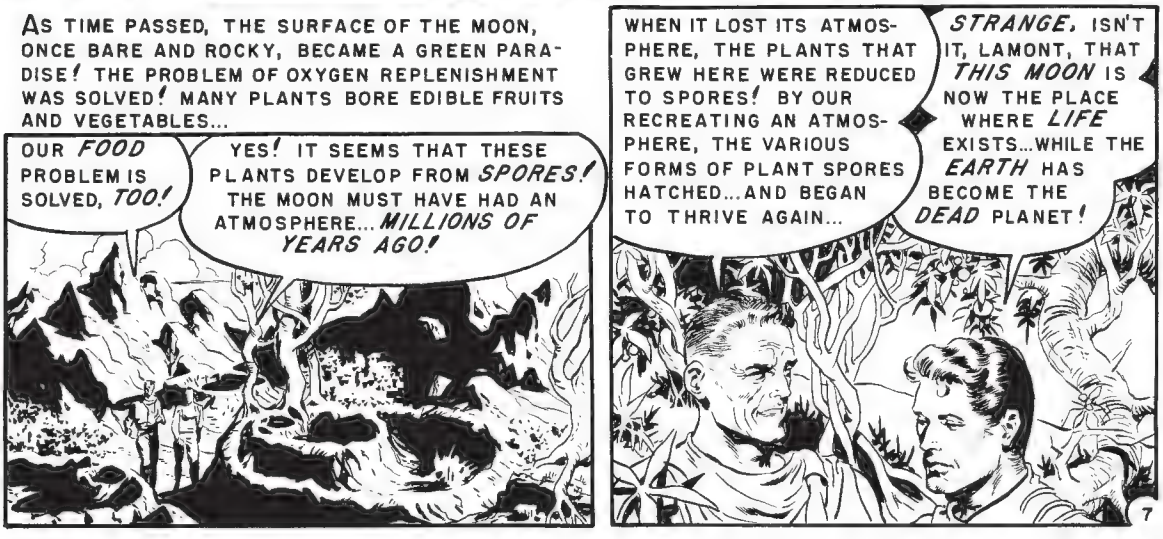
WE DEVELOPED RADIO TROUBLE SHORTLY AFTER OUR TAKE-OFF! ARE THEY...
EVERYONE ON EARTH HAS SUFFOCATED! THE ATMOSPHERE IS ALL UP HERE!
TAKE A LOOK IN THIS TELESCOPE, MR. LAMONT!
GOOD LORD! THE EARTH'S A VOLCANIC INFERNO...

THE EARTH, MINUS ITS PROTECTIVE ATMOSPHERE, HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO THE SUN'S INTENSE HEAT! IT BUBBLED AND BOILED...ITS SURFACE COVERED WITH MOLTEN POOLS OF LIQUID LAVA EXPLODING THROUGH CRACKS IN THE PARCHED CRUST...

MR. R.M. LAMONT, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF URANIUM DEVELOPMENT, TURNED AWAY FROM THE TELESCOPE... WHITE AS A GHOST...

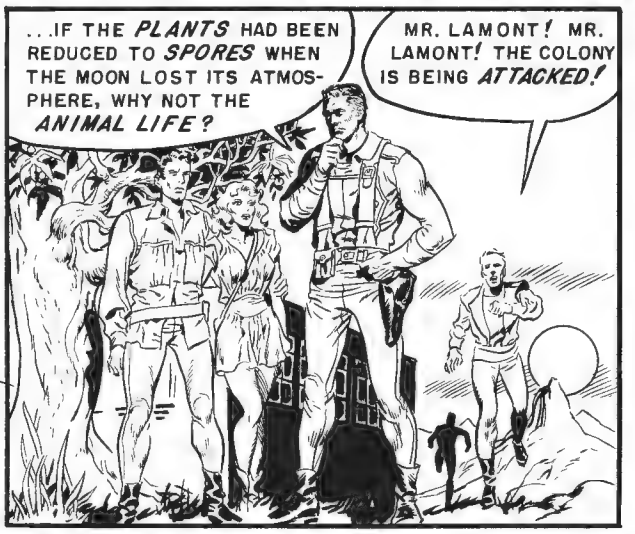
IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED, WITH THE ADDITION OF ITS NEW ATMOSPHERE, THE MOON BECAME A WARM, COMFORTABLE PLACE! THE U. D. MEN AND WOMEN WERE ABLE TO MOVE ABOUT WITHOUT THEIR SPACE-SUITS...
LOOK HOW HAPPY THEY ARE, LAMONT!
THAT'S BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW!
KNOW WHAT?
THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT SOON WE'LL RUN OUT OF FOOD! AND EVEN IF WE DID HAVE ENOUGH FOOD...
...WITHOUT PLANT LIFE TO RESTORE OXYGEN TO THE ATMOSPHERE, WE WOULD EVENTUALLY USE IT ALL UP BY OUR BREATHING! REMEMBER, DUE TO THE MOON'S LESSER MASS, IT RETAINED ONLY A SMALL FRACTION OF THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE!


THE FOOD SUPPLY WAS CAREFULLY RATIONED... BUT BY THE TIME A YEAR HAD PASSED, IT HAD BECOME DANGEROUSLY LOW! THEN, ONE DAY...
MR. LAMONT! MR. LAMONT! COME QUICKLY! WE'VE FOUND SOMETHING! A PLANT... GROWING!
A PLANT! WHERE? TAKE ME TO IT... QUICKLY!
MR. LAMONT WAS TAKEN ACROSS THE BARREN WASTES OF THE MOON'S SURFACE TO WHERE THE PLANT HAD BEEN FOUND...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I NEVER THOUGHT PLANT LIFE COULD GROW ON THIS ROCKY SURFACE!
IT SEEMS TO BE AN ALIEN VARIETY, UNLIKE ANYTHING THAT GREW ON EARTH!


AS TIME PASSED, THE SURFACE OF THE MOON, ONCE BARE AND ROCKY, BECAME A GREEN PARADISE! THE PROBLEM OF OXYGEN REPLENISHMENT WAS SOLVED! MANY PLANTS BORE EDIBLE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES...
OUR FOOD PROBLEM IS SOLVED, TOO!
YES! IT SEEMS THAT THESE PLANTS DEVELOP FROM SPORES! THE MOON MUST HAVE HAD AN ATMOSPHERE... MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO!
WHEN IT LOST ITS ATMOSPHERE, THE PLANTS THAT GREW HERE WERE REDUCED TO SPORES! BY OUR RECREATING AN ATMOSPHERE, THE VARIOUS FORMS OF PLANT SPORES HATCHED... AND BEGAN TO THRIVE AGAIN...
STRANGE, ISN'T IT, LAMONT, THAT THIS MOON IS NOW THE PLACE WHERE LIFE EXISTS... WHILE THE EARTH HAS BECOME THE DEAD PLANET!
7

THE FUTURE OF THE COLONY OF EARTH PEOPLE ON THE MOON BEGAN TO LOOK BRIGHTER IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS! BUT ONE DAY, AN EXPLORING PARTY CAME UPON A STRANGE SIGHT. . .

THE EXPLORING PARTY, HORRIFIED AT WHAT THEY HAD SEEN, REPORTED BACK...


...IF THE PLANTS HAD BEEN REDUCED TO SPORES WHEN THE MOON LOST ITS ATMOSPHERE, WHY NOT THE ANIMAL LIFE?
MR. LAMONT! MR. LAMONT! THE COLONY IS BEING ATTACKED!

THE HORRIBLE VICIOUS MOON MONSTERS BORE DOWN UPON THE HELPLESS COLONY! THEY KILLED MANY UNFORTUNATE ONES WHO WERE NOT ABLE TO ESCAPE...

THOSE THAT ESCAPED THE ATTACK RETREATED TO THE ONE PLACE OF SAFETY LEFT TO THEM! UP ABOVE, THE REVITALIZED MONSTERS ROAMED ABOUT.. THE PLANTS CONTINUED TO GROW...

THE TWO-CENTURY JOURNEY!

Wood.

THE TASK WAS A *TREMENDOUS* ONE! IT TOOK ALMOST *FORTY-FIVE YEARS* TO BUILD THE SHIP! WHEN IT WAS COMPLETED, IT TOWERED MORE THAN *TWO MILES** ABOVE THE PARCHED SANDS OF THE PROVINCE OF NEW MEXICO'S BADLANDS! THIS DESOLATE SPOT IN THE STATE OF NORTH AMERICA WAS THE ONLY *UNPOPULATED* AREA IN THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES OF EARTH *LARGE ENOUGH* TO PERMIT ITS LAUNCHING! THE SHIP POINTED SKYWARD LIKE SOME GIGANTIC SKYSCRAPER, GLEAMING IN THE HOT DESERT SUN! DOWN BELOW, THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE PEOPLE THAT HAD LUCKILY BEEN CHOSEN FOR THE TRIP BEGAN TO BOARD IT...

ATTENTION ALL PASSENGERS! WHEN YOU HAVE STOWED YOUR PERSONAL BELONGINGS IN YOUR RESPECTIVE LIVING QUARTERS, REPORT TO THE AUDITORIUM ON THE FOURTH LEVEL...FORWARD SECTOR THREE...FOR BRIEFING!

AT TAKE-OFF TIME MINUS FIVE HOURS, THE AUDITORIUM IN THE GIGANTIC SHIP WAS FILLED TO CAPACITY! THERE WAS A HUBBUB OF EXCITEMENT THROUGH THE GATHERED AUDIENCE WHICH QUICKLY HUSHED AS A GRAY-HAIRED, DISTINGUISHED-LOOKING SCIENTIST APPROACHED THE DIAS...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! AS YOU ALL KNOW, YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO PARTAKE IN AN EXPEDITION OF COLONIZATION TO A PLANET IN ANOTHER SOLAR SYSTEM WHICH *NONE OF US HERE TODAY WILL LIVE TO SEE...*

1

*EDITORS' NOTE: ALTHOUGH ROCKET SHIPS ARE A NEAR REALITY, A SHIP OF THIS SIZE MAY SEEM A BIT FAR-FETCHED, IT'S TRUE! BUT REMEMBER...TO COLUMBUS, ON HIS SANTA MARIA, A LINER OF THE QUEEN ELIZABETH'S CLASS WOULD HAVE SEEMED *JUST* AS ABSURD!

THERE WAS A MURMUR THROUGH THE AUDIENCE AS THE SCIENTIST CONTINUED...

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF EARTH DECIDED TO *BUILD* THIS SHIP, THERE WERE OVER *TWO AND ONE HALF MILLION APPLICATIONS* RECEIVED! OUT OF THESE, *YOU* SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SOME-ODD LUCKY ONES WERE CHOSEN...*CAREFULLY SELECTED*... FOR YOUR *PHYSICAL* AND *MENTAL QUALITIES*...

YOU ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE *PRESSING PROBLEM* OF THE EARTH'S GROWING *OVER-POPULATION!* YOU ALL KNOW THAT COLONIZATIONS OF THE *OTHER* PLANETS OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM HAD BEEN TRIED...AND PROVEN *COMPLETE FAILURES!* THERE REMAINED BUT *ONE ALTERNATIVE*...

WE HAD TO FIND A PLANET IN *ANOTHER* SOLAR SYSTEM THAT WAS *ALMOST LIKE EARTH!* FIFTY TWO YEARS AGO, *ENFIELD*...THE FAMOUS ASTRO-PHYSICIST... DISCOVERED IT! IT IS A PLANET WITH ALMOST EXACTLY THE SAME *DIAMETER* AS EARTH...LOCATED APPROXIMATELY THE SAME *DISTANCE* FROM ITS STAR AS EARTH IS FROM THE SUN... AND ITS STAR IS ABOUT THE *SAME SIZE* AS OUR SUN!

CONDITIONS SEEMED PERFECT! THERE WAS BUT *ONE SERIOUS DRAWBACK!* THE PLANET WAS *ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY THREE LIGHT YEARS* FROM EARTH! IT MEANT THAT TRAVELING WITH COMPTON'S OVERDRIVE AT *THE SPEED OF LIGHT*...THE *MAXIMUM* SPEED ATTAINABLE TODAY...IT WOULD TAKE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY THREE YEARS TO *REACH* THE PLANET...

THIS, THEN, WAS THE PROBLEM! *HOW* TO MAKE A TRIP OF *THAT DURATION?* THE ANSWER LAY IN CONSTRUCTING A SPACE SHIP *LARGE ENOUGH* TO PERMIT A *SMALL ORGANIZED SOCIETY* TO TRAVEL IN COMFORT... LIVE THEIR LIVES... BEAR CHILDREN...REAR THEM...EDUCATE THEM IN THE PURPOSE OF THE TRIP...UNTIL FINALLY... OVER THE SPAN OF *SIX GENERATIONS*... THE PLANET WOULD BE REACHED!

THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE TO BE ABLE TO *GROW THEIR OWN FOOD* AND *OXYGEN-PRODUCING PLANTS* IN ORDER TO *SURVIVE!* FOR THAT PURPOSE, *HYDROPONIC FARMS*... FARMS THAT GROW PLANTS *CHEMICALLY*... WOULD HAVE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DESIGNING OF THE SHIP! ALSO, THERE WOULD BE NEED FOR *LABORATORIES* TO SYNTHESIZE MATERIALS FOR CLOTHING AND NECESSITIES! HUGE *STORE ROOMS* OF RAW MATERIALS WOULD HAVE TO BE INCLUDED!

IT WAS THEN DECIDED THAT ONLY A SHIP THE SIZE OF *THIS ONE* COULD BE CONSIDERED! IT WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED THAT THE SHIP CARRY *ONE THOUSAND* PEOPLE...BUT *RE-CALCULATIONS* AFTER COMPLETELY EQUIPPING IT, SHOWED THAT *MORE FUEL* THAN PLANNED WAS NEEDED FOR LAUNCHING... SO...TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY FIVE PEOPLE HAD TO BE *ELIMINATED!* YOU FORTUNATE PEOPLE REMAINED! MAY I COMMEND YOU ALL FOR VOLUNTEERING! TAKE-OFF IS IN FOUR HOURS, FORTY MINUTES!

2

AT TAKE-OFF TIME MINUS ONE, THE PASSENGERS OF THE GIANT SPACE SHIP RETURNED TO THEIR LIVING QUARTERS TO READY THEMSELVES! THE AREA SURROUNDING THE SHIP FOR THREE MILES WAS CLEARED OF CURIOUS OBSERVERS...

PLEASE WITHDRAW TO BEYOND THE CONCRETE WALLS! THERE WILL BE EXTREME DANGER FROM ROCKET EXHAUST HEAT AND FUMES!

INSIDE THE SHIP, THE MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN STRAPPED THEMSELVES INTO THEIR FOAM RUBBER LAUNCHING SHOCK BEDS...

TAKE-OFF TIME NOW... MINUS TEN MINUTES!

HIGH UP IN THE FORWARD CONTROL COMPARTMENT, BUTTONS WERE PRESSED... SWITCHES WERE THROWN... AND DEEP DOWN IN THE BOWELS OF THE SHIP, HUGE GENERATORS BEGAN TO THUNDER...

TAKE-OFF TIME... ONE MINUTE!

THE SECONDS TICKED OFF! THE SEVEN-HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-ODD HUMAN BEINGS IN THE SHIP STEELED THEMSELVES... GRITTED THEIR TEETH...

TEN... NINE... EIGHT... SEVEN... SIX...

...FIVE... FOUR... THREE... TWO... ONE! THE GIANT SHIP SHUDDERED AS THE ROCKET FIRING LEVER WAS THROWN! THE GROUND BELOW THE GLEAMING MONSTER TREMBLED AS CLOUDS OF ROCKET EXHAUST EXPLODED FROM THE REAR VENTS...

WITH A DEAFENING ROAR, THE TWO-MILE-HIGH SPACE LEVIATHAN LIFTED SLOWLY... CLIMBING SKYWARD...

THERE IT GOES!

LORD! WHAT AN INCREDIBLE SIGHT!

TWENTY TWO MINUTES LATER, THE HUGE SHIP TORE LOOSE FROM THE EARTH'S GRAVITATIONAL FIELD AND HURTLED THROUGH OUTER SPACE IN FREE-FALL! THE COMPTON OVERDRIVE WAS TURNED ON AND THE SPACE MONSTER SPED INTO THE BLACK VOID AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT...

ATTENTION, ALL PASSENGERS! SYNTHO-GRAV NOW OPERATING! PERMISSION TO LEAVE LAUNCHING SHOCK BEDS GRANTED! RATION-MARKETS WILL BE OPENED AT 0400!

3

THE TRIP HAD BEGUN! EACH FAMILY OF THE HUGE SPACE GIANT HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO A COMFORTABLE APARTMENT! UNMARRIED MEN AND WOMEN HAD THEIR OWN ROOMS! THE RATION-MARKETS WERE LARGE FOOD STORES LOCATED ON EACH LEVEL...

THAT WILL BE ALL, THANK YOU! HOW MUCH IS THAT?
SORRY, LADY! EARTH MONEY'S NO GOOD ON THE SHIP! YOU CAN CHARGE IT TILL PAY DAY! YOU'LL BE PAID IN SHIP'S CURRENCY!

EVERY PERSON ABOARD THE SHIP HAD A JOB TO DO! THEY RECEIVED WAGES, AND THE ECONOMY WAS THE SAME AS ANY TOWN BACK ON EARTH! THEY PAID FOR CLOTHES... FOOD... RENT... EVEN LUXURIES...

I'D LIKE TO BUY A TELE-VIS SET! I UNDERSTAND THE SHIP'S PROGRAMS ARE VERY GOOD!
YES! HERE'S A MODEL... FULL COLOR... THREE DIMENSIONAL... FOR ONLY SEVENTY CREDITS!

THE PEOPLE THAT GREW THE FOOD FOR THE SHIP HAD EACH BEEN ASSIGNED A SMALL PORTION OF THE HYDROPONIC FARMS THAT COVERED ALMOST TWO ENTIRE LEVELS...

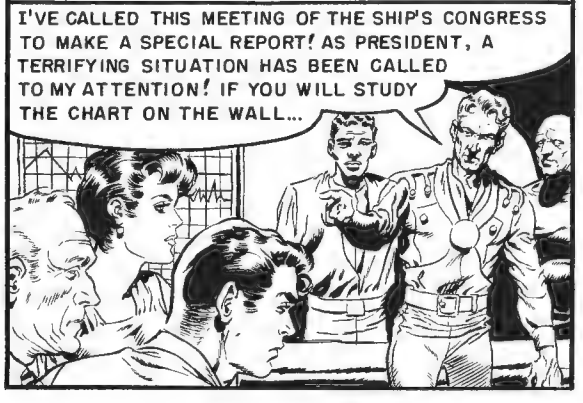
IT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A MINIATURE EARTH SOCIETY... EVEN THE CLOTHING MANUFACTURERS HAD THEIR PROBLEMS...

THEY'RE NOT BUYING ANYTHING!
TAKE IT EASY! THEY ARE STILL WEARING THE CLOTHES THEY CAME ABOARD WITH! THE SHIP'S BANK IS GIVING US CREDIT! BUSINESS WILL PICK UP!

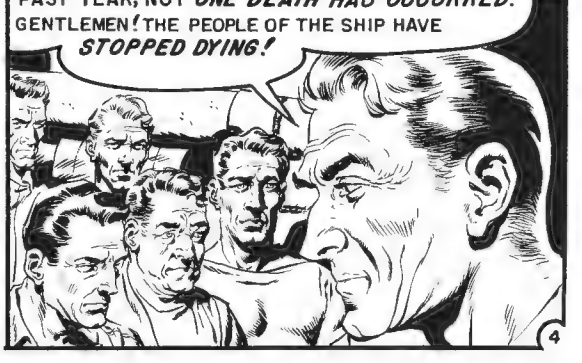
ABOUT A YEAR OUT, THE FIRST BABY WAS BORN...

ISN'T HE CUTE? LOOK AROUN', LIL' FELLER! THIS IS WHERE YOU'RE GOING TO SPEND YOUR WHOLE LIFE! RIGHT HERE ON THIS SHIP!
AT LEAST HE'LL BE MORE COMFORTABLE THAN IF HE WERE BACK ON THE CROWDED EARTH!

AND SO THE SHIP CONTINUED ON INTO THE INFINITE VOID OF SPACE! THE YEARS PASSED! THE SOCIETY FLOURISHED! THE FARMS PRODUCED FOODS... THE LABORATORIES PRODUCED RAW MATERIALS... AND THE WOMEN PRODUCED CHILDREN...

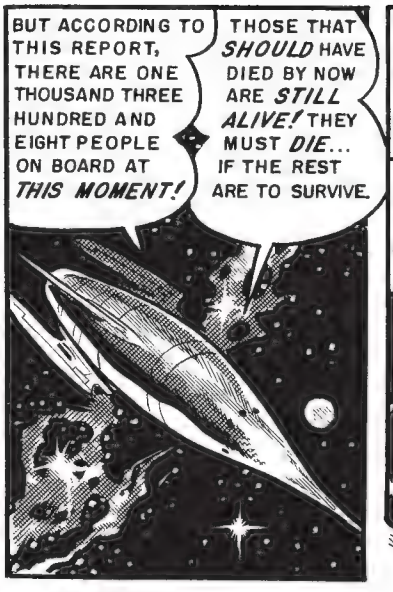

I'VE CALLED THIS MEETING OF THE SHIP'S CONGRESS TO MAKE A SPECIAL REPORT! AS PRESIDENT, A TERRIFYING SITUATION HAS BEEN CALLED TO MY ATTENTION! IF YOU WILL STUDY THE CHART ON THE WALL...

...YOU WILL NOTICE THAT THE BIRTH RATE FOR THE TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS SINCE THE SHIP LEFT EARTH HAS REMAINED NORMAL! THE DEATH RATE, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS FALLEN SHARPLY IN THE LAST EIGHT YEARS! IN THE PAST YEAR, NOT ONE DEATH HAS OCCURRED! GENTLEMEN! THE PEOPLE OF THE SHIP HAVE STOPPED DYING!



LOOK AT JOHNSON! HE WAS FIFTY-SIX WHEN HE LEFT! I ASK YOU, DOES HE LOOK LIKE A MAN OF EIGHTY-THREE?
HE ONLY LOOKS SIXTY...!
PRECISELY! IT APPEARS THAT THE AGING PROCESS HAS SLOWED UP CONSIDERABLY!
AND WITH THE NORMAL BIRTH RATE CONTINUING, THE SITUATION COULD BECOME SERIOUS IN ANOTHER TEN YEARS! THE SHIP WILL BECOME OVER-POPULATED!
WE'VE GOT TO STOP HAVING CHILDREN!
NO! THAT'S NOT THE SOLUTION! AT LEAST, NOT YET! FIRST LET'S FIND OUT WHY THE AGING PROCESS HAS COME TO A VIRTUAL STANDSTILL!
GENTLEMEN! I CAN TELL YOU THE ANSWER! FOR A LONG TIME IT HAS BEEN THE THEORY THAT COSMIC RAYS BOMBARDING THE EARTH HAVE CAUSED THE BREAKDOWN OF HUMAN TISSUE...PRODUCING OLD AGE! BECAUSE OF THE GREAT THICKNESS OF THE SHIP'S HULL...
...WE HAVE BEEN PROTECTED FROM MOST COSMIC RAYS! HOWEVER... SOME RAYS DO PIERCE THE HULL... AND SLIGHT AGING WILL OCCUR! THAT'S WHY JOHNSON SEEMS TO HAVE AGED ONLY FOUR YEARS IN TWENTY-SEVEN!
BUT EVENTUALLY...WE WILL DIE...NOT IN THE NORMAL LIFE SPAN... SOME OF US MAY LIVE TO BE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY!
THEN IF WE STOPPED HAVING CHILDREN NOW, IT WOULD DO NO GOOD!
NO! IT WOULD BE A CREW OF OLD PEOPLE THAT WOULD FINALLY REACH THE PLANET! WHO KNOWS IF THEY'D BE ABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN BY THEN?
THERE IS ONLY ONE SOLUTION! THE BIRTHS MUST CONTINUE NORMALLY! AND SO MUST THE DEATHS!
YOU MEAN...
5

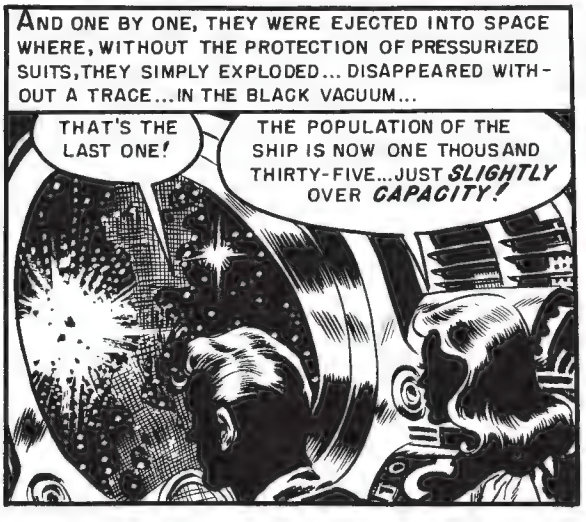
YES! I MEAN THAT AS EACH NEW BIRTH OCCURS, THE OLDEST MEMBER OF THE SHIP'S SOCIETY MUST DIE! EITHER THAT...OR WE FACE *EVENTUAL STARVATION!* OUR HYDROPONIC FARMS CAN PRODUCE ONLY ENOUGH FOOD FOR ONE THOUSAND PEOPLE AT THE MOST!


BUT ACCORDING TO THIS REPORT, THERE ARE ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHT PEOPLE ON BOARD AT *THIS MOMENT!*
THOSE THAT *SHOULD* HAVE DIED BY NOW ARE *STILL ALIVE!* THEY MUST *DIE*... IF THE REST ARE TO SURVIVE.

FOR A LONG MOMENT, SILENCE BLANKETED THE GATHERED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SHIP'S SOCIETY. IT WAS A PAINFUL DECISION TO MAKE! SUDDENLY, JOHNSON STOOD UP...
I AM *EIGHTY-THREE!* ACCORDING TO ALL INSURANCE STATISTICS, THE *AVERAGE SPAN OF LIFE IS SEVENTY-TWO! I AM READY TO DIE!*

ALL EYES FELL UPON THIS WELL-PRESERVED MARTYR! THEN, ONE BY ONE, THOSE OVER SEVENTY-TWO STOOD UP...
I AM READY *ALSO!*
...AND I!
...FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE EXPEDITION... I, TOO, AM READY!

THERE WERE MANY TEAR-STAINED FACES AND REDDENED EYES ON THE SHIP THE DAY THE OLD ONES LEFT! THERE WERE NEARLY THREE HUNDRED OF THEM! ONE BY ONE THEY ENTERED THE AIR-LOCK...
GOOD-BYE, MY CHILDREN!
GOOD-BYE, GRANDPA!
SOB... SOB... GOOD-BYE... SOB... FATHER!


AND ONE BY ONE, THEY WERE EJECTED INTO SPACE WHERE, WITHOUT THE PROTECTION OF PRESSURIZED SUITS, THEY SIMPLY EXPLODED... DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE...IN THE BLACK VACUUM...
THAT'S THE LAST ONE!
THE POPULATION OF THE SHIP IS NOW ONE THOUSAND THIRTY-FIVE...JUST *SLIGHTLY* OVER *CAPACITY!*

FROM *NOW ON*, AS EACH *BIRTH OCCURS*, THE *OLDEST MEMBER* OF OUR SOCIETY MUST *LEAVE* THE SHIP! *THAT IS THE LAW!*
GOOD GOD! I'M *SEVENTY-ONE!* I'M PROBABLY *NEXT!*
6

AND SO, THE SHIP CONTINUED ON THROUGH THE INKY VOID! THE LAW THAT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SHIP'S CONGRESS HAD PASSED BECAME A TRADITION! BY THE HUNDRETH YEAR, 'OLD-AGE' HAD VANISHED FROM THE SHIP! PEOPLE OF SIXTY AND SEVENTY APPEARED TO BE IN THEIR THIRTIES...

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! THERE HAS JUST BEEN A BIRTH IN THE SHIP'S HOSPITAL! WILL SOCIETY MEMBER 3309 REPORT TO THE AIR-LOCK...

3309

THE POPULATION OF THE SHIP REMAINED ALMOST CONSTANT... HOVERING AROUND ONE THOUSAND. IN APRIL OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH YEAR...

CAPTAIN HARRISON! PLEASE COME TO RADAR-VIEW! *IMMEDIATELY! URGENT!*

CAPTAIN HARRISON, THE FIFTH CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP, DESCENDED TO THE THIRD LEVEL AND HURRIED DOWN THE MILE-LONG CORRIDOR TO RADAR-VIEW IN FORWARD SECTOR SEVEN...

WHAT'S WRONG?

LOOK, SIR! I'M GETTING A *METAL PIP!*

THE CAPTAIN STUDIED THE GREENISH-YELLOW GLOW ON THE CALIBRATED SCREEN...

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, RAWLINS?

IT'S ABOUT FIVE THOUSAND MILES TO STARBOARD, SIR. SEEMS TO BE PRETTY SMALL...TRAVELING FAST... HEADED IN THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF OUR OWN SOLAR SYSTEM!

SOON, THE GLOW DIMMED AND DISAPPEARED...

IT'S GONE OUT OF RANGE!

PROBABLY JUST A METEOR OR WANDERING ASTEROID! HIGH METAL CONTENT, THOUGH!

THE PASSING OF THE METALLIC METEOR WAS SOON FORGOTTEN! THEN...IN THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-THIRD YEAR...

THERE IT IS, CAPTAIN JACKSON! THE SOLAR SYSTEM CONTAINING OUR DESTINATION!

WE'LL BE LANDING IN FOUR DAYS!

THE SHIP BUZZED WITH EXCITEMENT AS IT NEARED THE PLANET IT HAD TRAVELED SO LONG TO REACH! FINALLY, IT WAS CLEARLY VISIBLE ON THE TELESCREENS THROUGHOUT THE SHIP...

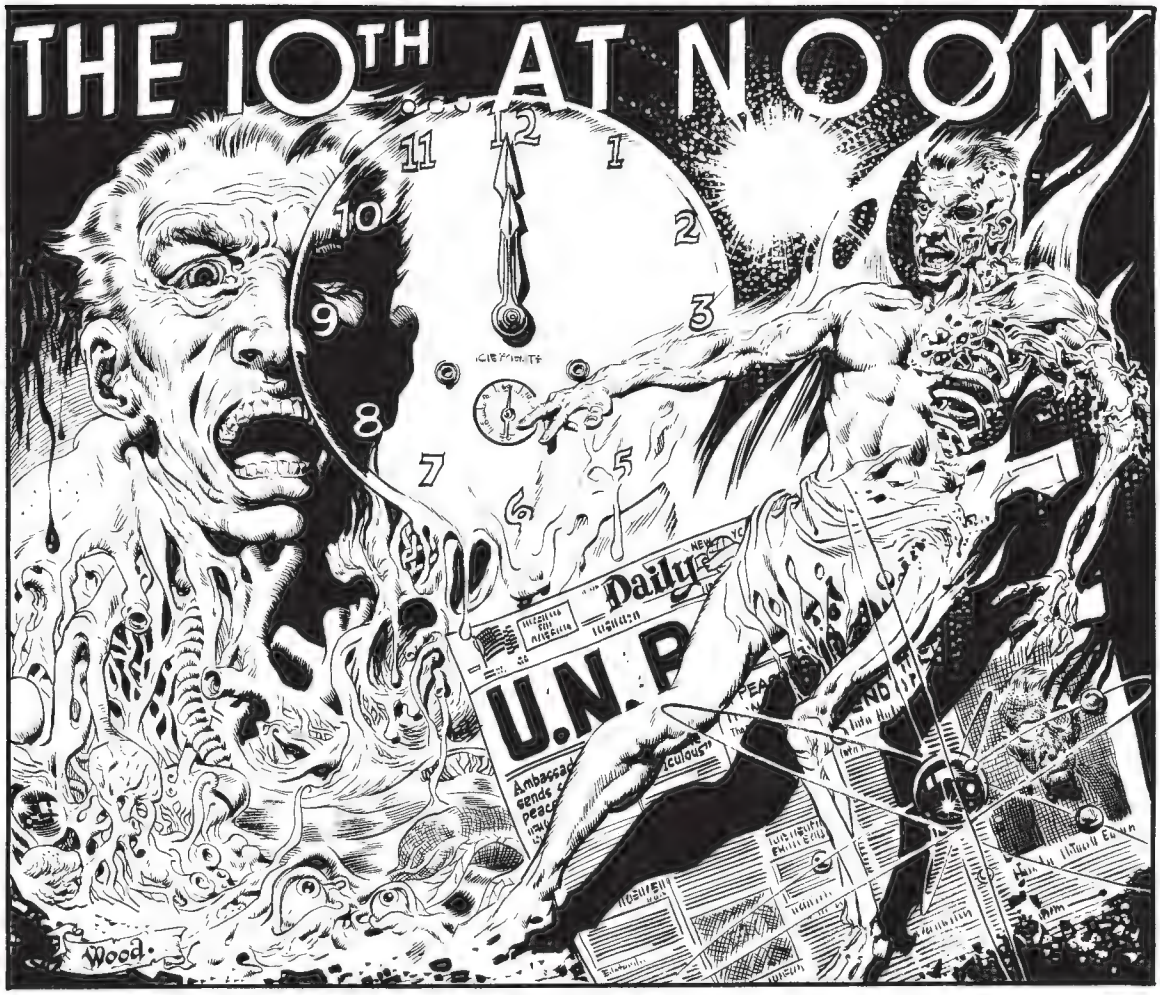
IT LOOKS VERY MUCH LIKE EARTH! ONLY THE LAND FORMATIONS ARE DIFFERENT!

LOOK! IN THE DARK HALF... WHERE IT IS NIGHT! *LIGHTS!*

GOOD LORD! CIVILIZATION!

7

CAPTAIN JACKSON CLEARS HIS THROAT AND SMILES AT THE WEIRD HUMANOID BEFORE HIM...
THAT'S THE STORY, MR. PRESIDENT! YOU KNOW THE REST! WE LANDED IN THE ARID WASTES OF YOUR WESTERN HEMISPHERE CONTINENT!
YES! NEW MISTICO, WE CALL IT!
YOU CAN UNDERSTAND OUR SHOCK, SIR, AT FINDING A CIVILIZATION HERE... A CIVILIZATION SO MUCH LIKE OUR OWN ON EARTH!
THERE IS A SIMPLE EXPLANATION, CAPTAIN!
YOU PICKED THIS PLANET BECAUSE OF ITS STARTLING SIMILARITY TO YOUR OWN... ITS EQUAL SIZE... ITS ALMOST EQUAL DISTANCE FROM ITS SUN WHICH IS SO MUCH LIKE YOUR SUN!
YOU NEVER REALIZED THAT SINCE IT WAS SO MUCH LIKE EARTH... ITS EVOLUTION HERE WOULD HAVE PARALLELED YOURS CLOSELY! WE LOOK ALMOST ALIKE... YOU AND I... AND OUR PROBLEMS ARE THE SAME!
PROBLEMS?
YES, CAPTAIN! WE HERE ON URD ARE FACED WITH AN OVER-POPULATION PROBLEM ALSO! AND WE ATTEMPTED TO SOLVE IT THE SAME WAY YOU DID!
YOU MEAN, YOU SENT OUT A SHIP, TOO?
THE ALMOST HUMAN CREATURE NODS...
YES! ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIX YEARS AGO! IT MUST HAVE PASSED YOU...
THE METEOR! THE METEOR I READ ABOUT! IT WAS RECORDED SIXTY-THREE YEARS AGO!
THAT WAS IT, CAPTAIN! AND THE SAME RECEPTION AWAITS THEM AS THE ONE YOU HAVE RECEIVED! WE CAN MAKE ROOM FOR YOU HERE! THERE WILL BE MANY DISCOMFORTS, BUT YOU ARE ALL WELCOME TO REMAIN!
I... I DON'T KNOW, SIR! PERHAPS WE'LL STAY! PERHAPS NOT! I DON'T KNOW! LIFE ON THE SHIP WASN'T... TOO BAD!
THE END
8



HIGH UP OVER NEW YORK'S EAST RIVER, IN THE MODERNISTIC STRUCTURE THAT SERVES AS THE PERMANENT HOME OF THE U.N., THE DOOR TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S CHAMBER BURSTS OPEN AND A MELEE OF REPORTERS EXPLODES THROUGH...

ONE SIDE! LEMME AT THAT PHONE!

HOLY COW! *THIS IS IT!*

WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT'S *HAPPENED?*

IT'S THE *EASTERN ALLIANCE!* THEY'VE DELIVERED AN *ULTIMATUM!*

THE PHONE BOOTHS THAT HUG THE CORRIDOR WALL ARE FILLED WITH BREATHLESS NEWSMEN...

GIMME THE DESK... PRONTO!

YEAH! THAT'S RIGHT! THEY'VE GIVEN US TILL *DECEMBER 10TH AT 12 NOON!*

...AND IF THEIR DEMANDS *AREN'T MET,* THEY'RE GOING TO USE *THE BOMB!*

YEAH.. THE *HYDROGEN BOMB!*

1

BUT AT THE EXACT MOMENT THAT THIS WORLD-SHATTERING EVENT IS TAKING PLACE...ACROSS THE HUDSON RIVER, IN THEIR LABORATORY ON THE PALISADES OVERLOOKING TEEMING NEW YORK CITY...TWO SCIENTISTS GAZE AT A GLITTERING ARRAY OF TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT...

SOON, THE FIELD-BOARD...THE TABLE UPON WHICH THE CAMERA WAS PLACED... IS QUITE BARE...

AND IN A *MOMENT*... WE WILL KNOW WHETHER OR NOT OUR THREE YEARS OF WORK HAS BEEN IN VAIN!
HERE! HERE IS THE *CAMERA!* PLACE IT ON THE *FIELD-BOARD!*

THE SCIENTIST NAMED SANDERS ADJUSTS A CALIBRATED KNOB CAREFULLY...

SLOWLY, THE SECONDS TICK OFF! ONE MINUTE...TWO! THEN...

A SMALL CAMERA IS PLACED ON A TABLE-LIKE APPENDAGE OF THE HUGE MACHINE AND POINTED OUT OF THE LAB'S HUGE PICTURE WINDOW TOWARD THE NEW YORK SKYLINE . . .

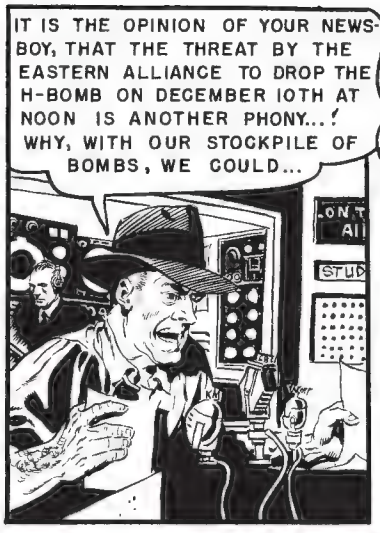
PROFESSOR HUXTON PULLS A SWITCH TO THE POSITION MARKED 'INJECT'! SUDDENLY, THE LABORATORY IS FILLED WITH FLASHING LIGHTS AND A CRACKLING DIN...

YES! WHEN THE *TWO MINUTES PASSED*, THE CAMERA *REAPPEARED!* THE *POINT* IN TIME...TO WHICH THE CAMERA HAD BEEN INJECTED...WAS REACHED!
NOW, WE MUST SEE IF WE CAN *TAKE PICTURES* OF THE *FUTURE!*
2

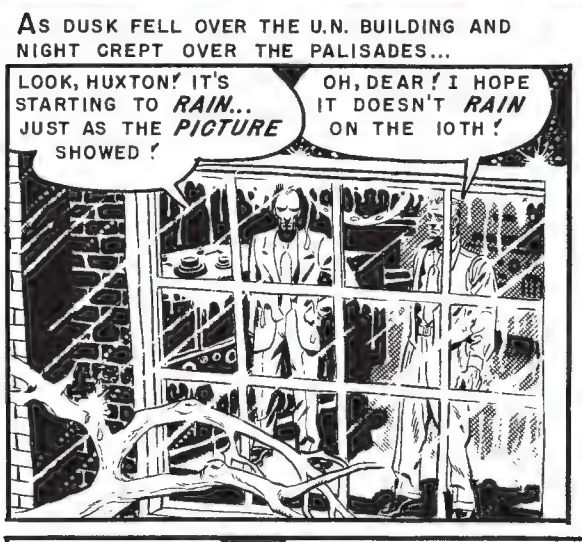
MEANWHILE, IN THE NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS OF THE U.N., THE REPORTERS ARE ONCE AGAIN RUSHING TO THE WAITING PHONE BOOTHS...
HOLD THE PRESSES! GIMME THE DESK!
THAT'S RIGHT! THE UNITED STATES HAS THREATENED IMMEDIATE RETALIATION IF THE H-BOMB IS DROPPED!
YEAH! WE CALLED THEIR BLUFF! THEY WOULDN'T DARE USE IT NOW! IT MEANS RISKING ATOMIC WAR!
MEANWHILE, BACK ACROSS THE HUDSON...
IT'S AFTERNOON NOW! SET THE INJECTION TIME TO FIVE HOURS! IT WILL BE NIGHT BY THEN...
RIGHT! FIVE... HOURS! THERE! IS THE FILM IN THE CAMERA?
YES! AND IT IS SET TO TAKE A ONE MINUTE TIME EXPOSURE!
GOOD! HERE GOES!
WITH THE MACHINE SET FOR FIVE HOURS, THE LEVER IS PULLED TO THE 'INJECT' POSITION! SOON, THE FILM-LOADED CAMERA GROWS HAZY...THEN DISAPPEARS...
GIVE IT ENOUGH TIME TO TAKE THE PICTURE BEFORE YOU PUSH THE SWITCH TO "RETURN".
IF THE PICTURE SHOWS THE NEW YORK SKYLINE LIT UP AT NIGHT, WE WILL HAVE SUCCEEDED IN TAKING A PICTURE OF THE FUTURE!
THREE MINUTES DRAG BY! THEN, THE SWITCH IS PUSHED TO THE RETURN POSITION! LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE CAMERA APPEARS ONCE AGAIN ON THE FIELD-BOARD...
IT'S BACK! DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS MEANS, HUXTON? WE CAN SEND AN OBJECT INTO THE FUTURE AND PULL IT BACK TO THE PRESENT AT WILL!
HURRY! LET'S DEVELOP THE PICTURE!
THE EXPOSED NEGATIVE IS QUICKLY DEVELOPED AND A PRINT IS MADE! THE TWO SCIENTISTS STUDY IT...
SEE! THE LIGHTS! THE MILLIONS OF LIGHTS! NEW YORK... AT NIGHT!
AND OUTSIDE IT'S STILL DAYLIGHT!
WHAT'S THAT... ON THE PICTURE? FINE, GLISTENING LINES! IT LOOKS LIKE...
RAIN! DROPS OF FALLING RAIN! IT'S GOING TO RAIN TONIGHT!
3.

AT THAT MOMENT...IN THE U.N.'S PRESS ROOM HIGH UP OVER NEW YORK'S LATE AFTERNOON SKYLINE...
HOW MANY MORE MINUTES TILL THE RECESS IS OVER?
FIVE! UGH! MY CORNS HURT! THAT MEANS RAIN!
THINK THOSE BIRDS WILL GIVE IN?
HOW SHOULD I KNOW? AM I A POLITICIAN?
THEY'LL HAVE TO, NOW! THEY WOULDN'T DARE RISK AN ATOMIC WAR!
THEY'D BE CRAZY! THE U.S. HAS TOO MANY H-BOMBS!
YEAH! SO WHAT?
SO IF THEY DROP 'EM ON THE DEAD-LINE THEY GAVE US, WE'LL RETALIATE! THAT'S WHAT!
A LOT OF GOOD RETALIATION WILL DO AFTER THEY'VE DESTROYED OUR CITIES!
WHAT KIND OF TALK IS THAT? YOU SOUND LIKE ONE OF THEM!
AW, CUT IT OUT, YOU GUYS! C'MON! THEY'RE FILING IN!
WHILE, AT THE LABORATORY ON THE PALISADES...
THINK OF WHAT THIS CAN MEAN, SANDERS! WE CAN PREDICT THE WEATHER OVER NEW YORK CITY ACCURATELY!
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS 'INJECT' THE CAMERA INTO THE FUTURE TO THE DAY WE WANT TO FORECAST, AND TAKE A PICTURE!
AT THE U.N...
HOLD THE PRESSES! GET READY FOR A REMAKE!
THE ULTIMATUM STANDS! THEY'VE GIVEN US UNTIL DECEMBER 10TH AT NOON!
...OR ELSE! I STILL THINK THEY WOULDN'T DARE!
AND SO, WHEN THE NEWSPAPERS HIT THE STREETS, THEY CARRY SCREAMING HEADLINES...
EXTRA! EXTRA! EASTERN ALLIANCE DELIVERS ULTIMATUM! THREATENS TO USE H-BOMB IF DEMANDS ARE NOT MET!
U.S. THREATENS RETALIATION!
4

EXTRA
ATOMIC WAR IMMINENT!
Daily Times
ONE WEEK TO DEADLINE SET BY EASTERN ALLIANCE!
WILL THE H-BOMB BE DROPPED? AN EDITORIAL! THIS PAPER SAYS NO!
ULTIMATUM OF NO CONCERN SAYS NOTED


IT IS THE OPINION OF YOUR NEWSBOY, THAT THE THREAT BY THE EASTERN ALLIANCE TO DROP THE H-BOMB ON DECEMBER 10TH AT NOON IS ANOTHER PHONY...! WHY, WITH OUR STOCKPILE OF BOMBS, WE COULD...

THEY'D BE FOOLS! AN H-BOMB WAR COULD *WIPE OUT CIVILIZATION!*
I SAY... DON'T GIVE IN! THEY'RE *BLUFFING!*


AS DUSK FELL OVER THE U.N. BUILDING AND NIGHT CREPT OVER THE PALISADES...
LOOK, HUXTON! IT'S STARTING TO *RAIN*... JUST AS THE *PICTURE* SHOWED!
OH, DEAR! I HOPE IT DOESN'T *RAIN* ON THE 10TH!

WHY? WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE 10TH?
DON'T YOU REMEMBER? THE *BIG GAME* IS ON THE 10TH! THE UNIVERSITY PLAYS ITS *ARCH RIVAL,* STATE COLLEGE, ON THAT DAY! AND I *HATE* WATCHING FOOTBALL IN THE RAIN!

OH, YES! WELL! WE COULD *FIND OUT* EASILY ENOUGH!
THAT'S RIGHT! *HURRY!* LOAD THE CAMERA! I'LL SET THE TIME!

LET'S SEE! THE GAME STARTS AT *1 P.M.!* I'LL SET THE *'INJECTION-TIME'* FOR *12:30!*
WE CAN *ONLY* PHOTOGRAPH *NEW YORK*... BUT THAT'S ALL RIGHT! IF IT'S FAIR OVER THE *CITY,* IT WILL PROBABLY BE FAIR AT THE *STADIUM* ALSO!
5

THE CAMERA IS SET SANDERS!
HERE GOES!
THE 'INJECT' LEVER IS PULLED...
IT'S GETTING HAZY!
IT'S GOING INTO THE FUTURE!
AFTER A FEW MOMENTS...
THAT'S TIME ENOUGH! BRING IT BACK!
RIGHT!
THE CAMERA REAPPEARS...
NOW WE'LL SEE WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE ON THE 10TH AT 12:30!
LET'S DEVELOP THE PICTURE!
SLOWLY, THE IMAGE FORMS ON THE SENSITIZED PAPER...
CAN YOU SEE ANYTHING, SANDERS? CAN YOU?
NOT YET! AH! NOW, IT'S COMING! IT... IT...
THE PICTURE OF NEW YORK CITY'S SKYLINE IS QUITE CLEAR...
GOOD LORD!
THE END

a Gobl is a Knog's best Friend
CAPTAIN HAROLD DEXTER, COMMANDER OF THE SPACE-SHIP POLARIS-B, CURSED AS HE FELT HIMSELF RISE FROM CONTROL DECK AND FLOAT LAZILY UPWARD LIKE A SOAP BUBBLE! HE REACHED OUT, GRASPED A VENTILATOR LEVER, AND PULLED HIMSELF TOWARD THE INTERCOM! HE THREW THE SWITCH ANGRILY AND SHOUTED INTO IT...
HAWKINS! WHAT IN BLAZES IS WRONG WITH THE SYNTHO-GRAV?
SORRY, SIR! MAGNETO BLEW! I'LL HAVE IT FIXED IN A FEW MINUTES!
WOOD
1

ANYTHING NOT BOLTED DOWN BEGAN TO FLOAT ABOUT THE RED-FACED SHIP COMMANDER! HE PULLED HIMSELF TO A LOCKER, WITHDREW A HEAVY PAIR OF MAGNETIC SHOES, AND BEGAN LACING THEM ON...THEN THE SHIP WAS SUDDENLY FILLED WITH A BLOOD-CURDLING HOWLING...

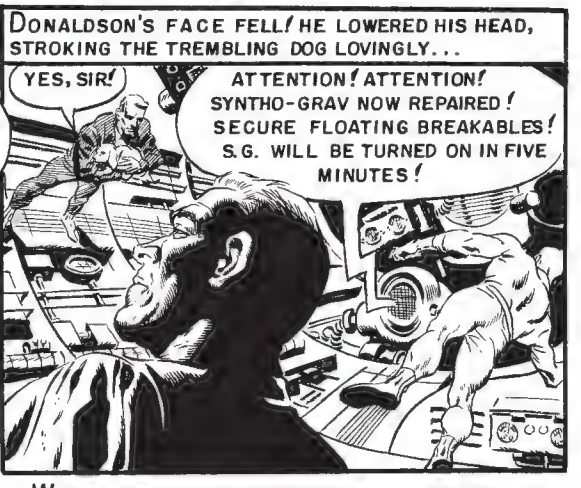
THE HOWLING CONTINUED AS CAPTAIN DEXTER FINISHED DONNING HIS MAGNETIC SHOES AND BEGAN CLANKING THROUGH THE SHIP TOWARD THE CREW'S QUARTERS! AS HE SWUNG THROUGH THE STEEL DOOR, A WEIRD SIGHT MET HIS EYES.

DONALDSON LOOKED UP WITH SURPRISE AS THE CAPTAIN GLARED AT HIM...

DONALDSON COMPLETED LACING HIS MAGNETIC SHOES AND MADE HIS WAY UP THE SIDE-WALL OF THE CREW'S QUARTERS TILL HE REACHED THE FLOATING, FRIGHTENED DOG...

THERE, THERE, BOY! I'VE GOT YOU NOW! DON'T BE SCARED! THERE... THERE...
I'VE WARNED YOU TWICE ABOUT THAT MUTT, DONALDSON! ONE MORE TIME AND HE GOES THROUGH THE AIR-LOCK!

DONALDSON'S FACE FELL! HE LOWERED HIS HEAD, STROKING THE TREMBLING DOG LOVINGLY...



CAPTAIN DEXTER TURNED AND MADE HIS WAY PAINFULLY BACK TO THE CONTROL DECK! THERE WERE VALUABLE NAVIGATION INSTRUMENTS THAT COULD BE BADLY DAMAGED IF THEY WERE FLOATING ABOUT WHEN THE SYNTHO-GRAV WAS TURNED ON AGAIN! HE GATHERED THEM UP CAREFULLY...

WITH THE SYNTHO-GRAV RESTORED, ALAN DONALDSON FROLICKED HAPPILY IN THE CREW'S QUARTERS WITH HIS PET...

So... the rocket ship Polaris-B hurtled on through space toward its destination... the second planet of the star Polaris! Finally... several months later...
There she is, sir! Dead ahead! We'll *reach* her in a *few hours!*
Tell the crew to report to their stations and *prepare for landing,* lieutenant!
The ship buzzed with excitement! As the alien planet drew nearer, the men of the Polaris-B strapped themselves into their shock-hammocks! Alan Donaldson held his pet dog tightly in his arms, quieting him...
Stand by for approach! Everyone ready? Donaldson! You got your mutt?
Yes, sir! I've got 'im! Steady boy!
Everyone's strapped in, sir!
The gleaming space giant skimmed over the strange planet's surface... then nosed upward...
Stand by! We're going in!
Steady, boy! You'll be all right, feller!
As the ship slid tail-first downward, a blast of rocket exhaust exploded from its rear... slowing its descent...
A second and a third blast brought the huge ship gently to rest...
We're down!
Stand by for further orders!
Captain Dexter released himself from his shock-hammock and strode to a panel of instruments...
How's it look, sir?
Those lab boys on earth were *right!* It *is* an *oxygen atmosphere!* We *won't need* our *space-suits!*
Then the commander of the Polaris-B took the intercom mike...
Attention! All hands! I want volunteers to form an exploration party! I must warn you that we know nothing of this planet or the life upon it! The risk will be great! Those who wish to join report to the air-lock!
3

A FEW MINUTES LATER, CAPTAIN DEXTER REACHED THE AIR-LOCK AND SURVEYED THE VOLUNTEERS...
THE AIR IS BREATHABLE SO WE WILL NOT NEED SPACE-SUITS! SIDE ARMS WILL BE ISSUED FOR PROTECTION! DAYS HERE ARE NINETEEN HOURS LONG... SO...SO... DONALDSON!
YES, SIR?
IF YOU'RE VOLUNTEERING FOR THIS PARTY, YOU'LL PLEASE LEAVE YOUR DOG BEHIND! THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT WE'LL RUN INTO AND I DON'T WANT ANY DUMB ANIMALS ALONG TO FOUL UP THE WORKS... UNDERSTAND?
Y...YES, SIR! C'MON, BOY!
SOON, A PORT IN THE SIDE OF THE SPACE-SHIP OPENED... GLEAMING LADDER RUNGS TELESCOPED FROM THE SHIP'S SURFACE... AND THE EXPLORATION PARTY DESCENDED...
STICK CLOSE TOGETHER! BE READY FOR ANYTHING!
LISTEN!
SOMETHING'S COMING!
IT BURST FROM THE WEIRD VEGETATION THAT GREW ON THE EDGE OF THE OPEN SPOT THEY'D LANDED IN, AND BORE DOWN UPON THEM...
LOOKS LIKE SOME SORT OF MACHINE!
IT'S A VEHICLE! THERE'S A CREATURE INSIDE!
THE STRANGE MACHINE SLOWED TO A STOP A FEW HUNDRED FEET AWAY AND A GIGANTIC GROTESQUE ALIEN ALIGHTED...
GOOD LORD! IT'S... DISGUSTING!
IT MUST BE TEN FEET HIGH!
IT'S STARING AT US!
THE THING NEARED THEM! IT CONTINUED TO STARE! CAPTAIN DEXTER RAISED HIS HAND IN A GESTURE OF PEACE! THE THING STOPPED SHORT...
DO NOT BE AFRAID! WE WON'T HARM YOU!
WE COME IN FRIENDSHIP!
THE CAPTAIN POINTED TO THE SHIP AND THEN SKYWARD...
WE COME FROM UP THERE... UP... SEE? IN THIS SHIP...
IT'S LOOKING AT US LIKE WE'RE NUTS!
4

THE THING RAISED AN APPENDAGE AND WAVED IT AT THE TRAVELERS...
IT WANTS US TO FOLLOW IT!
WHAT SAY, CAPTAIN?
LET'S GO!
THE ALIEN CREATURE LED THE EARTHMEN TO THE WEIRD MACHINE AND SIGNALED THEM TO BOARD IT...
HOT DOG! WE'RE GETTING A HITCH!
WHAT'S THIS THING MADE OF?
SEEMS PRETTY ADVANCED!
THE MACHINE SPED AWAY WITH THE EARTHMEN PERCHED UPON IT...
HEY! IT'S HEADED RIGHT INTO THOSE WOODS!
LOOK OUT, YOU IDIOT!
BUT THE VEGETATION IN FRONT OF THE SPEEDING MACHINE JUST MELTED AWAY BEFORE IT...
HEY! THIS IS PRETTY GOOD!
CLEARS ITS OWN ROAD!
BEHIND THEM, THE FOLIAGE CLOSED IN AGAIN...
NO! LOOK! THE STUFF GOES RIGHT BACK AS WE PASS!
IT DOESN'T CLEAR IT...
...IT PASSES THROUGH IT!
SUDDENLY, A GREAT SHINING CITY ROSE UP BEFORE THEM... ITS TOWERS GLEAMING IN POLARIS'S RADIANCE! TINY SPECKS DARTED ABOUT ABOVE IT...
THE THING'S CITY!
LOOK! AERO-CABS FLYING AROUND!
THESE JOES ARE MORE ADVANCED THAN WE ARE!
THE MACHINE DREW TO A STOP BEFORE AN IMPOSING STRUCTURE, AND THE ALIEN CREATURE GOT OUT! HE TURNED TOWARD THE EARTHMEN AND STARED... THEN MOTIONED TO THEM TO FOLLOW HIM...
HE'S GOING INSIDE!
HE WANTS US TO COME ALONG!
GO AHEAD! WE'VE GONE THIS FAR...
5

THE CREATURE THAT HAD BROUGHT THE EARTHMEN MET SEVERAL MORE CREATURES! THEY STUDIED EACH OTHER... THEN THE SPACE TRAVELERS... THEN EACH OTHER AGAIN...

CAPTAIN DEXTER STEPPED FORWARD AND STARED AT THE WEIRD CREATURES! HE WAS THINKING HARD... TRYING TO COMMUNICATE! ONE OF THE THINGS SHRUGGED... AND STROKED THE CAPTAIN ON HIS SHOULDER...

SUDDENLY, ANOTHER CREATURE ENTERED THE BUILDING! OUTSIDE, A THRONG OF THEM HAD GATHERED. THE CREATURES INSIDE STEPPED BACK AS THOUGH THEY RESPECTED THIS NEW ARRIVAL...

BEHIND THE CREATURE THAT APPROACHED, A FIGURE FOLLOWED! IT LOOKED SOMEWHAT HUMANOID...

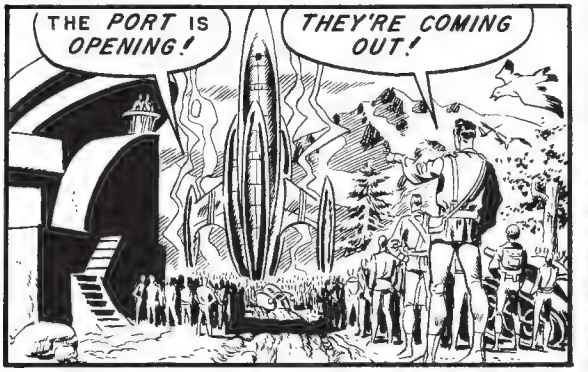
THE ALMOST HUMAN CREATURE SPOTTED THE EARTHMEN AND STOPPED! IT STUDIED THEM...THEN SMILED AND NEARED THEM...

THE WEIRD MONSTERS CLOSED IN! OTHERS APPEARED! THEY SNATCHED UP THE STRUGGLING EARTHMEN BEFORE ANY OF THEM COULD ACT...

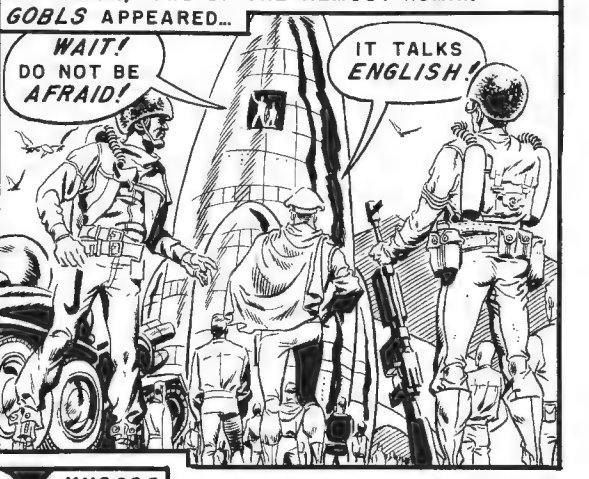
6.

THE STRUGGLING EARTHMEN, ALONG WITH THE HUMAN-LIKE CREATURE, WERE DEPOSITED IN A GLASS-WALLED ENCLOSURE! THEIR SIDEARMS WERE REMOVED...
THEY'VE TAKEN US PRISONER!
LOOK! MORE HUMAN-LOOKING CREATURES!
THE HUMAN-SHAPED CREATURES CROWDED AROUND THE EARTHMEN... CHATTERING! CAPTAIN DEXTER LOOKED ABOUT AT THE HIGH TRANSPARENT WALLS.
THIS MUST BE A PRISON COMPOUND OF SOME SORT! DONALDSON! YOU'RE THE LANGUAGE EXPERT! GET TOGETHER WITH ONE OF THESE THINGS! FIND OUT WHAT YOU CAN!
YES, SIR!
LATER, THE TRAVELERS LEFT IN THE ROCKET SHIP WERE BROUGHT IN! DONALDSON SPENT SEVERAL HOURS WITH ONE OF THE ALIENS UNTIL HE WAS ABLE TO UNDERSTAND ITS LANGUAGE...
WELL, DONALDSON?
IT CALLS ITSELF A GOBL, SIR!
AND THE MONSTERS? THE HIDEOUS IDIOTIC CREATURES THAT CAPTURED US!
IT CALLS THEM KNOGS, SIR!
ASK IT WHY THE KNOGS ARE HOLDING THE GOBLS PRISONERS?
IT SAYS THAT THEY'RE NOT BEING HELD PRISONERS!
NOT?
NO, SIR! THE GOBL SAYS THIS IS ITS HOME! IT SAYS THIS WILL BE OUR HOME FROM NOW ON, TOO!
WHAT ELSE DOES IT SAY?
IT SAYS THE KNOGS ARE... ARE... GOOD LORD!
7

IT WAS ALMOST A YEAR LATER THAT THE POLARIS-B WAS DETECTED APPROACHING EARTH! WHEN IT FINALLY LANDED, HUGE THRONGS WERE PRESENT TO CHEER THE TRAVELERS...



BUT AS THE PORT SWUNG WIDE...INSTEAD OF EARTHMEN, TWO OF THE ALMOST-HUMAN GOBLS APPEARED...



ON THE SECOND PLANET OF POLARIS... WHERE WE COME FROM... WE ARE THE PETS OF THE CREATURES THAT INHABIT IT!
OUR MASTERS SENT US... IN FRIENDLY EXCHANGE FOR YOUR COUSINS... WHO THEY THOUGHT WERE SENT TO OUR PLANET!

IN THE GLASS-LIKE COMPOUND ON POLARIS-B, THE WEIRD SILENT KNOGS TOSSED SCRAPS OF FOOD TO THE IMPRISONED EARTHMEN AND THEIR ALMOST-HUMAN FELLOW PETS...

EDITOR'S NOTE: A KNOG IS TO A GOBL AS A MAN IS TO A DOG! IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE KNOGS WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND THE EARTHMEN! DO YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR DOG WHEN IT BARKS?

The End. 8

the ANDROID!

IT ALL BEGAN THE DAY CENTRAL MANPOWER SENT OVER THE SECRETARY I'D REQUISITIONED! AS THE DOORS TO THE VACUUM-LIFT PARTED, AND I STEPPED OUT ONTO THE SIXTY-FIFTH LEVEL WHERE MY OFFICE WAS LOCATED, I SAW HER STANDING THERE... WAITING FOR ME...

I BEG YOUR PARDON! ARE YOU MR. MARTIN? I'M YOUR NEW SECRETARY! MY NAME IS ELLEN CORWIN! *MISS* ELLEN CORWIN!

OH! HOW DO YOU DO, MISS CORWIN! I'M SORRY I'M LATE! WON'T YOU COME IN?

I UNLOCKED THE GLASS DOOR TO MY SOLAR OFFICE AND STEPPED ASIDE! AS MISS CORWIN WALKED IN, I LOOKED HER OVER! SHE WAS *BEAUTIFUL!* HER HAIR WAS A GLEAMING GOLDEN WATERFALL SPLASHING OVER HER SHOULDERS! HER FACE WAS ANGELIC... HER EYES WERE DARK AND PIERCING... HER LIPS SOFT AND EXCITING...

HERE'S YOUR DESK... OVER HERE, MISS CORWIN!

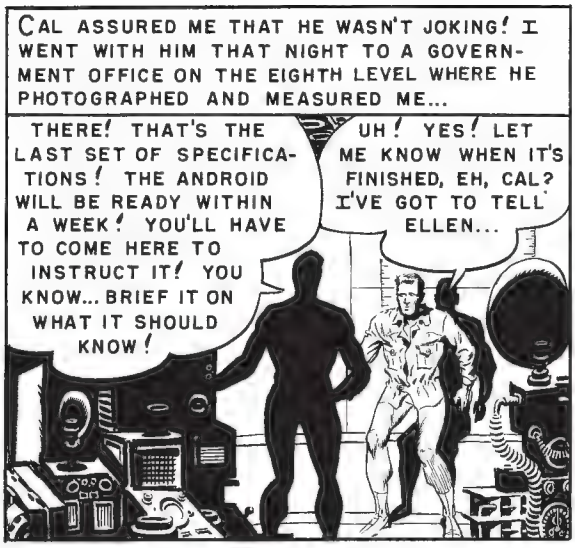
THANK YOU, MR. MARTIN! YOU'LL HAVE TO SHOW ME... ER... WHAT I HAVE TO *DO!*

1

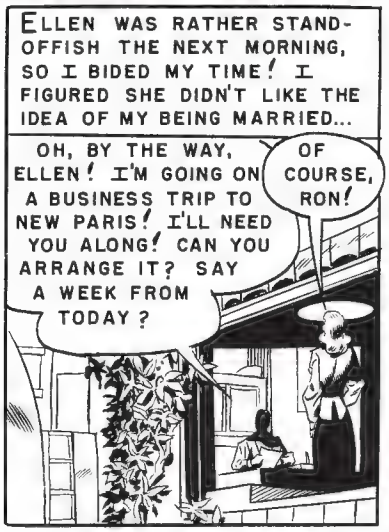
I SPENT THE WHOLE MORNING SHOWING MISS CORWIN THE ROPES! AT NOON I INVITED HER TO HAVE LUNCH WITH ME, AND WE TOOK THE 'VAC' UP TO THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH LEVEL TO A ROMANTIC LITTLE RESTAURANT I KNEW...
I'VE NEVER BEEN HERE BEFORE, MR. MARTIN! IT'S LOVELY!
FORGET THE MISTER STUFF, ELLEN! CALL ME RON! WE'RE GOING TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER PRETTY WELL... YOU AND I!
THAT NIGHT, WHEN I STEPPED OFF THE 'VAC' ON THE TWO-HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEVEL WHERE MY APARTMENT WAS LOCATED, I WAS WHISTLING A CHEERY LITTLE TUNE! AS I MOVED ALONG THE GLEAMING STEEL PLATFORM, I KEPT THINKING ABOUT ELLEN! I UNLOCKED THE DOOR...
RONALD? THAT YOU?
YES, LITA! IT'S ME!
LITA WAS MY WIFE! WE'D BEEN MARRIED ABOUT FOUR YEARS! AT FIRST IT HAD BEEN WONDERFUL, BUT IN THE LAST YEAR OR SO, OUR TORRID ROMANCE HAD COOLED OFF...
HAVE A HARD DAY AT THE OFFICE, RON?
NOT TOO HARD, LEE!
I THOUGHT ABOUT ELLEN! WITH HER THERE, NO DAY AT THE OFFICE WAS GOING TO BE HARD FROM NOW ON...
THEY'VE GOT A GOOD SHOW AT THE TELERENA TONIGHT, RON! CARE TO GO?
NOT TONIGHT, LEE! WHY DON'T YOU GO ALONG WITHOUT ME?
LITA BLEW UP! I WAS PRETTY USED TO IT, THOUGH! IT WAS GETTING TO BE A NIGHTLY OCCURRENCE...
JUST WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO, RONALD MARTIN? ALL DAY LONG I SIT AROUND THIS STINKING APARTMENT WAITING FOR YOU... AND WHEN YOU COME HOME, YOU PLOP ON THAT AIR-COUCH AND...
PLEASE, LITA! NOT TONIGHT!
SHE RAVED ON...
YOU NEVER TAKE ME ANYWHERE ANYMORE! YOU HARDLY SAY TWO WORDS TO ME ALL EVENING! IT'S AS THOUGH YOU'RE TIRED OF ME ALREADY!
NO, LEE! I'M NOT TIRED OF YOU! I'M JUST TIRED! THAT'S ALL!
WELL, I'M GOING TO THE TELERENA WITHOUT YOU! I DESERVE A LITTLE FUN NOW AND THEN! GOOD NIGHT! DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME!
GOOD NIGHT, LEE! HAVE A GOOD TIME!
2

LITA WAS RIGHT! I WAS TIRED OF HER! AFTER SHE LEFT I SAT ON THE AIR-COUCH FOR A WHILE...TRYING TO REMEMBER WHEN IT WAS THAT THE FLAME HAD DIED! THEN I THOUGHT OF ELLEN...BEAUTIFUL, EXCITING ELLEN! I WENT TO THE VISAPHONE AND KEYED HER NUMBER.
HELLO? OH... IT'S YOU, MR. MARTIN!
HELLO, ELLEN! I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD DROP AROUND TONIGHT?
YOU...YOU MEAN, SOCIALLY?
WHY NOT? ANYTHING WRONG WITH THAT?
BUT...YOU'RE MARRIED!
THAT...THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO SEE YOU ABOUT! CAN I...COME?
AT FIRST ELLEN WAS HESITANT, BUT SHE FINALLY CONSENTED AND I HOPPED A 'VAC' TO HER PLACE! SHE LIVED ON THE THREE-HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH LEVEL! AS SHE OPENED THE DOOR TO MY EAGER KNOCK, I GASPED! SHE WAS DRESSED IN A SEMI-TRANSPARENT GOWN THAT SHOWED OFF HER EXOTIC FIGURE ...
COME IN, RON! WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTHING...NOW, ELLEN!
I KNEW IT AT THAT MOMENT! I KNEW I WAS IN LOVE WITH HER...HEAD OVER HEELS IN LOVE! I TOLD HER ABOUT LITA...
... AND THAT'S THE STORY, ELLEN! THERE'S NOTHING THERE ANYMORE! NOTHING BETWEEN US! WE'RE LIKE TWO STRANGERS! UNTIL THIS MORNING, I THOUGHT MY LIFE WAS OVER...
THIS MORNING!? I...I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
I TOOK ELLEN'S HAND! I LOOKED INTO HER DARK WARM EYES...
THIS MORNING YOU CAME INTO MY LIFE! I...I THINK I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU THE MOMENT I SAW YOU!
PLEASE, RON! THIS IS WRONG! YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ME!
I KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU, ELLEN! THAT'S ALL I NEED KNOW!
YOU...YOU'D BETTER GO, RON! IT'S GETTING LATE!
3.

I LEFT ELLEN WITHOUT OBJECTING! I COULD TELL SHE WAS SHOCKED AT MY REVELATION OF LOVE AND I DIDN'T WANT TO ANTAGONIZE HER! I DECIDED TO WALK A LITTLE, SO I HOPPED A'VAC' TO THE PROMENADE LEVEL...
WHAT A GORGEOUS NIGHT! I WONDER IF LEE'S BACK FROM THE TELERENA YET!
RON MARTIN! YOU OLD SPACE-PIRATE!
IT WAS CAL TENNIS, AN OLD FRIEND! WE'D BEEN SPACE-SHIP PILOTS TOGETHER BEFORE OLD AGE GROUNDED US! OLD AGE FOR A ROCKET PILOT IS THIRTY! I HADN'T SEEN CAL SINCE THAT TIME...
CAL TENNIS! WHERE IN BLAZES HAVE YOU BEEN?
GOT TIED UP WITH SECRET GOVERNMENT WORK, RON! I'VE BEEN OUT OF CIRCULATION FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS...SINCE YOU AND I WERE WASHED OUT!
WE TALKED ABOUT OLD TIMES... ABOUT FAR-TRAVELING AND OTHER WORLDS WE'D SEEN! THEN CAL ASKED ABOUT LEE...
SHE'S OKAY, CAL!
S'MATTER, RON? SOMETHING WRONG BETWEEN YOU TWO?
I TOLD CAL EVERYTHING! I EVEN TOLD HIM ABOUT ELLEN...
GEE, RON! YOU'RE GOING TO BREAK LEE'S HEART!
I...WISH THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY, RON! BUT I'M IN LOVE WITH ELLEN!
CAL TOOK ME BEHIND A VENTILATOR INTAKE AND LOOKED AROUND CAGILY...
RON? DID YOU EVER HEAR OF ANDROIDS?
ANDROIDS? WHAT'RE THEY?
THEY'RE WHAT I'VE BEEN WORKING ON FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS! ANDROIDS ARE SYNTHETIC HUMANS! YOU CAN'T TELL THEM FROM THE REAL THING! THE GOVERNMENT IS EXPERIMENTING WITH THEM NOW!
SO? WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH ME?
I COULD GET AN ANDROID MADE THAT WOULD LOOK SO MUCH LIKE YOU, EVEN LEE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TELL THE TWO OF YOU APART! THIS ANDROID COULD... FREE YOU! YOU COULD TAKE OFF... GO EAST... MARRY ELLEN... AND LEE'D NEVER BE THE WISER!
YOU'RE NOT KIDDING ME, ARE YOU, CAL? THIS IS THE TRUTH?
4


CAL ASSURED ME THAT HE WASN'T JOKING! I WENT WITH HIM THAT NIGHT TO A GOVERNMENT OFFICE ON THE EIGHTH LEVEL WHERE HE PHOTOGRAPHED AND MEASURED ME...
THERE! THAT'S THE LAST SET OF SPECIFICATIONS! THE ANDROID WILL BE READY WITHIN A WEEK! YOU'LL HAVE TO COME HERE TO INSTRUCT IT! YOU KNOW... BRIEF IT ON WHAT IT SHOULD KNOW!
UH! YES! LET ME KNOW WHEN IT'S FINISHED, EH, CAL? I'VE GOT TO TELL ELLEN...

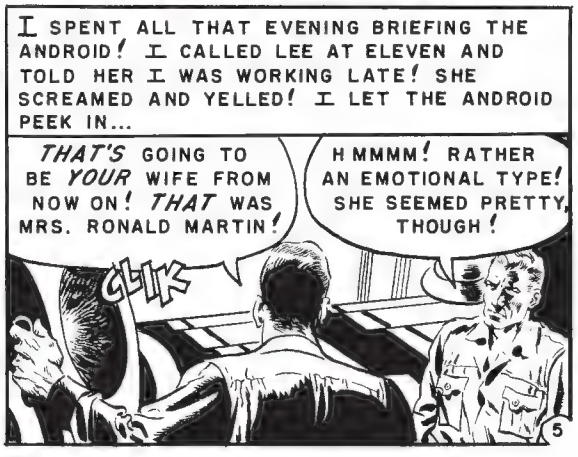
NO! DON'T BE A *FOOL!* THIS IS *HIGHLY SECRET GOVERNMENT WORK!* IF THEY FOUND OUT I WAS SLIPPING *YOU* ONE OF THESE THINGS, I'D BE *THROWN IN JAIL!* NO! KEEP THIS *QUIET!* Y'HEAR?
OKAY, CAL! I UNDERSTAND! MUM'S THE WORD!


ELLEN WAS RATHER STANDOFFISH THE NEXT MORNING, SO I BIDED MY TIME! I FIGURED SHE DIDN'T LIKE THE IDEA OF MY BEING MARRIED...
OH, BY THE WAY, ELLEN! I'M GOING ON A BUSINESS TRIP TO NEW PARIS! I'LL NEED YOU ALONG! CAN YOU ARRANGE IT? SAY A WEEK FROM TODAY?
OF COURSE, RON!

SHE MUST HAVE CAUGHT THE GLEAM IN MY EYE FOR SHE SMILED SHYLY! I HAD AN URGE TO GRAB HER BUT THOUGHT BETTER OF IT! TOWARD THE END OF THE WEEK, CAL CALLED...
HELLO, RON! YOUR... *ORDER IS READY!*
I'LL BE OVER TONIGHT, CAL!

THAT EVENING, WHEN I WENT TO THE GOVERNMENT OFFICE ON THE EIGHTH LEVEL AND SAW THE ANDROID, I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EYES! IT WAS LIKE LOOKING INTO A *MIRROR*...
LIKE IT, RON? IT'S A *FIFTY YEAR* MODEL! PROBABLY LAST LONGER THAN YOU WILL!
IT... IT'S *AMAZING!*

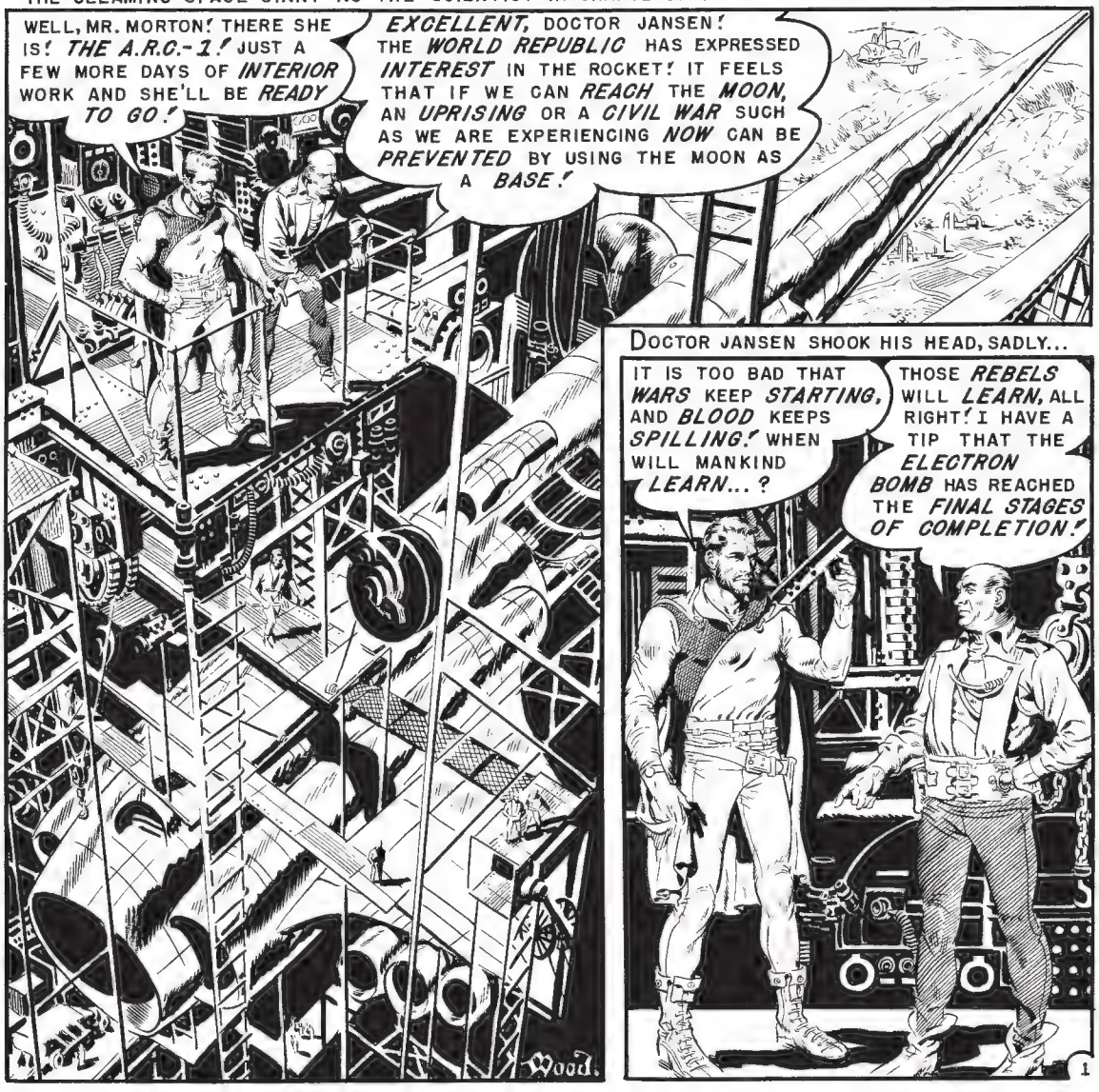
WE'VE SHOT THE THING FULL OF *GENERAL KNOWLEDGE!* NOW, *YOU'VE* GOT TO *TEACH* IT ABOUT *YOU!*
YES! IN ORDER FOR ME TO DO MY *JOB,* YOU MUST *TELL ME* WHAT I MUST *KNOW!*
MY LORD!


I SPENT ALL THAT EVENING BRIEFING THE ANDROID! I CALLED LEE AT ELEVEN AND TOLD HER I WAS WORKING LATE! SHE SCREAMED AND YELLED! I LET THE ANDROID PEEK IN...
THAT'S GOING TO BE *YOUR* WIFE FROM NOW ON! *THAT* WAS MRS. RONALD MARTIN!
HMMMM! RATHER AN EMOTIONAL TYPE! SHE SEEMED PRETTY, THOUGH!
CLIK
5

FOR THE REST OF THE NIGHT I BRIEFED HIM! THEN I GAVE THE ANDROID MY IDENTIFICATION, MY CLOTHES ...EVERYTHING... AND SENT HIM ON TO MY HOUSE! I WINCED AT THE THOUGHT OF THE BAWLING OUT HE WAS GOING TO GET! THEN I CALLED ELLEN...
DID I WAKE YOU, ELLEN? I'M SORRY! CAN YOU BE READY TO LEAVE IN TWENTY MINUTES?
OH? THE TRIP! YES! I'LL BE READY!
I PICKED ELLEN UP AT HER PLACE AND WE TOOK THE 'VAC' TO THE SKYPORT! I'D DECIDED TO HOLD OFF MAKING MY PITCH UNTIL WE REACHED ROMANTIC NEW PARIS! FINALLY WE WERE SETTLED IN A HOTEL THERE...
I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE, ELLEN!
YES, RON?
I TOOK HER IN MY ARMS...
I REALLY HAVE NO BUSINESS TO CONDUCT HERE IN NEW PARIS! I JUST WANTED TO GO AWAY... ALONE... WITH YOU! I WANT TO MARRY YOU, ELLEN!
RON! BUT... YOUR WIFE...
I TOLD ELLEN ABOUT CAL... AND THE ANDROID HE'D MADE FOR ME...
SO YOU SEE, I'M STILL WITH MY WIFE! OR RATHER MY DUPLICATE IS... THE ANDROID...
RON! YOU FOOL! YOU FOOL!
WHAT IS IT, ELLEN? WHAT ARE YOU LAUGHING AT? THE ANDROID...
WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM, ROD? I'M A GOVERNMENT ANDROID, TOO! A SIX-WEEK MODEL! IN ANOTHER WEEK I MUST REPORT BACK! I'M SCHEDULED TO DISASSEMBLE AT THAT TIME!
I REMEMBERED CAL HAD SAID THEY WERE EXPERIMENTING WITH THEM! I STARED AT ELLEN FOR A FEW SECONDS... THEN TURNED AWAY IN REVULSION! WHEN I ARRIVED BACK HOME, I WENT STRAIGHT TO MY APARTMENT! LEE OPENED THE DOOR...
GOOD LORD!
DON'T BE FRIGHTENED, LEE! I CAN EXPLAIN!
LEE LOOKED RADIANT IN SPITE OF HER SHOCKED EXPRESSION! I'D NEVER SEEN HER LOOK SO LOVELY! I STARTED TO EXPLAIN WHEN CAL AND THE ANDROID BURST IN...
THERE HE IS, CAL! GET RID OF HIM! LEE AND I HAVE MADE UP!
WHA...? NO, CAL! WAIT! I'M RON! HE'S THE ANDROI...
CAL SHOT ME WITH A PARALYZER AND I WENT RIGID! THE ANDROID TOOK LEE IN HIS ARMS... AND AS EVERYTHING WENT BLACK, I HEARD CAL SAYING...
GLAD YOU TWO ARE TOGETHER AGAIN! I'LL SEND THIS ANDROID BACK TO THE LAB FOR DISASSEMBLING!
THANKS, CAL!
THE END
6

Project...Survival!

OUR STORY BEGINS AT A TIME WHEN THE SCIENTIFICALLY ADVANCED CIVILIZATION OF EARTH FOUND ITSELF FACED WITH A BLOODY AND VIOLENT CIVIL WAR! THE NATIONS OF WHAT IS NOW KNOWN AS ASIA MINOR HAD REBELLED AGAINST THE WORLD REPUBLIC, SET UP THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT, AND WERE SAVAGELY DEFENDING THEMSELVES AGAINST THE WORLD REPUBLIC'S ARMIES SENT TO QUELL THE UPRISING! MEANWHILE, IN WHAT IS NOW NORTH AMERICA, THE *AMALGAMATED ROCKET CORPORATION* WAS COMPLETING WORK ON THE WORLD'S FIRST ROCKET SHIP... CAPABLE OF TRAVELING TO THE MOON! LUTHER MORTON, PRESIDENT OF THE AMALGAMATED ROCKET CORPORATION, EYED THE GLEAMING SPACE GIANT AS THE SCIENTIST IN CHARGE OF ITS CONSTRUCTION SMILED PROUDLY...


WELL, MR. MORTON! THERE SHE IS! *THE A.R.C.-1!* JUST A FEW MORE DAYS OF *INTERIOR* WORK AND SHE'LL BE *READY TO GO!*
EXCELLENT, DOCTOR JANSEN! THE *WORLD REPUBLIC* HAS EXPRESSED *INTEREST* IN THE ROCKET! IT FEELS THAT IF WE CAN *REACH* THE *MOON,* AN *UPRISING* OR A *CIVIL WAR* SUCH AS WE ARE EXPERIENCING *NOW* CAN BE *PREVENTED* BY USING THE MOON AS A *BASE!*
Wood.

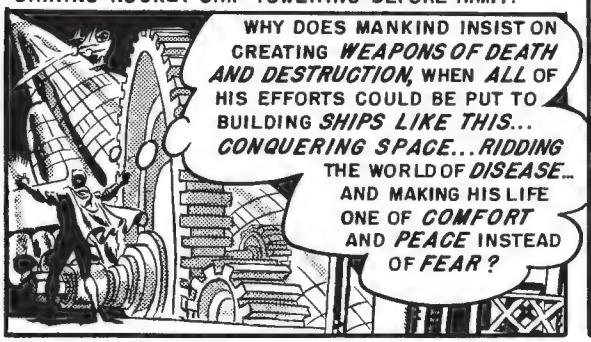
DOCTOR JANSEN SHOOK HIS HEAD, SADLY...

IT IS TOO BAD THAT *WARS* KEEP *STARTING,* AND *BLOOD* KEEPS *SPILLING!* WHEN WILL MANKIND *LEARN...?*
THOSE *REBELS* WILL *LEARN,* ALL RIGHT! I HAVE A TIP THAT THE *ELECTRON BOMB* HAS REACHED THE *FINAL STAGES OF COMPLETION!*
1

DOCTOR JANSEN PALED AS HE STARED AT LUTHER MORTON...

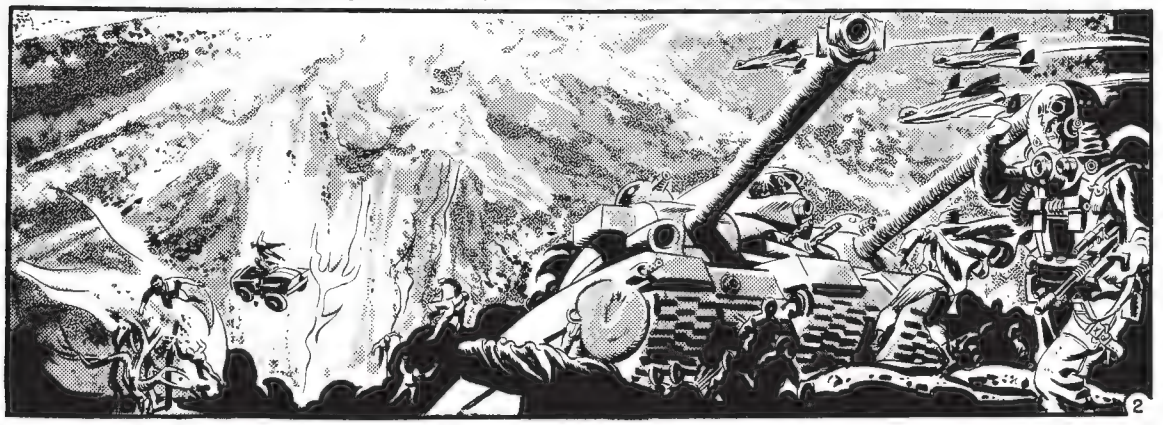
BUT THE ELECTRON BOMB'S STRENGTH HAS BEEN SUCH A SOURCE OF DISAGREEMENT! SOME SAY IT COULD MEAN THE DESTRUCTION OF LIFE ON EARTH! THE INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF HEAT GENERATED...
I'M AFRAID I DON'T GO ALONG WITH THAT SCHOOL OF SCIENCE, DOCTOR!

MR. MORTON BID DOCTOR JANSEN GOOD-DAY AND STRODE ACROSS THE A.R.C.-1'S CONSTRUCTION SITE TO A WAITING AIR-TAXI! DOCTOR JANSEN WATCHED THE GLASS-BUBBLED HELO-CRAFT RISE SKYWARD AND SPEED OFF! THEN HE TURNED AND GAZED UP AT THE SHINING ROCKET SHIP TOWERING BEFORE HIM...


WHY DOES MANKIND INSIST ON CREATING WEAPONS OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION, WHEN ALL OF HIS EFFORTS COULD BE PUT TO BUILDING SHIPS LIKE THIS... CONQUERING SPACE... RIDDING THE WORLD OF DISEASE... AND MAKING HIS LIFE ONE OF COMFORT AND PEACE INSTEAD OF FEAR?

MEANWHILE, THE SCIENTIFICALLY ADVANCED ARMIES OF THE WORLD REPUBLIC MOVED AGAINST THE REBELLIOUS NATIONS! WEAPONS OF DEATH... UNDREAMED OF TODAY...REAPED THEIR HARVESTS...

THEN SUDDENLY, BEFORE THE INVADERS... AMID THE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION THEY'D BROUGHT TO THE REBELLING NATIONS' FORCES...THE SKY WAS BLEACHED OUT BY A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT! A SEARING CHARRING WAVE OF HEAT SWEPT OVER THE BATTLEFIELD! A GIGANTIC COLUMN OF WHITE HOT FLAME LEAPED UPWARD... A CIRCLE OF BLACK SMOKE SPREADING FROM ITS BASE...



AT THE A.R.C.'S ROCKET CONSTRUCTION AREA, A RED-FACED, ENRAGED LUTHER MORTON SHOUTED THE NEWS TO A SHOCKED DOCTOR JANSEN...

WHAT? WHAT DID YOU SAY? THE REBELS ACTUALLY EXPLODED AN ELECTRON BOMB? OH, LORD...NO! NO!
THE DIRTY [illegible]!! WE NEVER KNEW THEY WERE WORKING ON IT! THEY BEAT US TO IT! WIPED OUT OUR INVASION FORCE!

IT WAS TRUE! THE SITE OF THE ELECTRON BOMB EXPLOSION WAS A MASS OF MOLTEN LAVA! BUT WHAT LUTHER MORTON, PRESIDENT OF AMALGAMATED ROCKET CORPORATION, *DIDN'T* KNOW WAS...

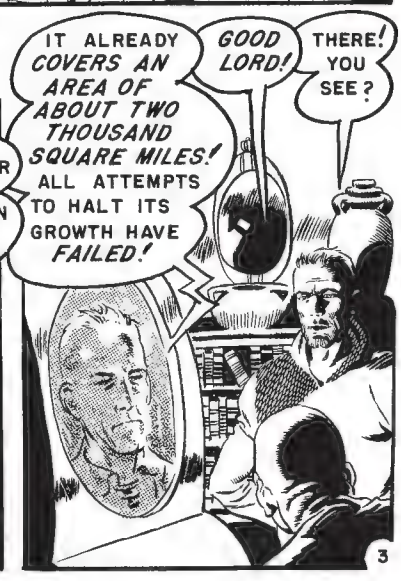
IT'S SPREADING! THE CRATER'S GETTING LARGER! THE INTENSE HEAT IS MELTING THE CRUST OF THE EARTH!
THE SIDES KEEP FALLING IN...INTO THAT BOILING POOL...

A REACTION? WAS THERE ANY REACTION?
HOW IN BLAZES SHOULD I KNOW? ALL I HEARD WAS THAT THE SITE WAS BUBBLING AND BOILING LIKE AN ERUPTING VOLCANO!

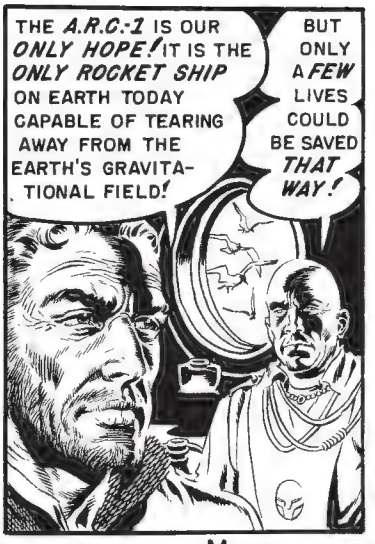
DOCTOR JANSEN, SCIENTIST IN CHARGE OF THE A.R.C.-1, LEARNED OF THE EVER-WIDENING BOMB CRATER, AND IMMEDIATELY RETIRED TO HIS LABORATORY! ON INTO THE NIGHT, HE BUSIED HIMSELF WITH CALCULATIONS...CHECKING AND RECHECKING! EARLY THE NEXT MORNING...

DOCTOR JANSEN SWITCHED ON THE TELE-RADIO ON MR. MORTON'S DESK...

WAIT! YOU'LL SEE! LISTEN!
...AND IT APPEARS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THAT THE CRATER OF MOLTEN LAVA LEFT BY THE ELECTRON BOMB IS CONTINUING TO GROW LARGER!

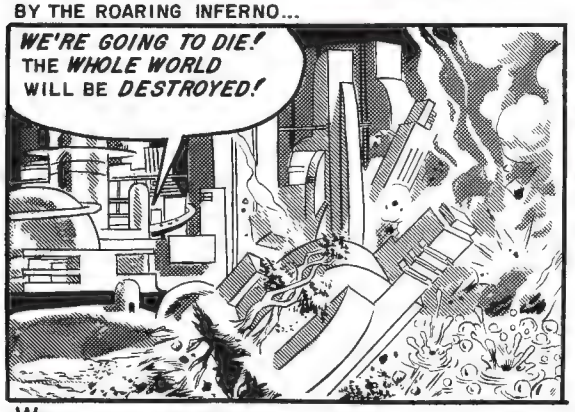

IT ALREADY COVERS AN AREA OF ABOUT TWO THOUSAND SQUARE MILES! ALL ATTEMPTS TO HALT ITS GROWTH HAVE FAILED!
GOOD LORD!
THERE! YOU SEE?
3

DOCTOR JANSEN SHUT OFF THE BLARING VOICE...

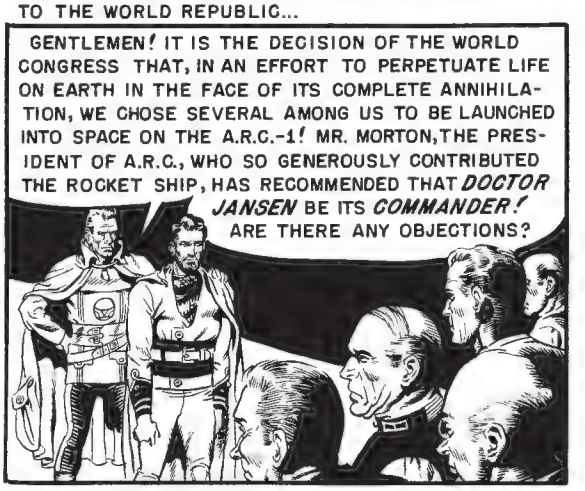

THE *A.R.C.-1* IS OUR *ONLY HOPE!* IT IS THE *ONLY ROCKET SHIP* ON EARTH TODAY CAPABLE OF TEARING AWAY FROM THE EARTH'S GRAVITATIONAL FIELD!
BUT ONLY A *FEW* LIVES COULD BE SAVED *THAT WAY!*

A *FEW* IS BETTER THAN *NONE!* I'VE SPENT THE NIGHT CALCULATING! IF WE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO *REACH THE MOON* WITH THE A.R.C.-1... BUT MERELY *LAUNCH IT INTO AN ORBIT* ABOVE THE EARTH... MUCH *VALUABLE SPACE* COULD BE *SAVED* THAT WOULD *ORDINARILY* BE *USED FOR FUEL!*

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, IT BECAME APPARENT TO THE PEOPLES OF EARTH THAT THEY FACED TOTAL DESTRUCTION! THE ELECTRON BOMB'S CRATER HAD ENLARGED UNTIL IT COVERED SIXTEEN THOUSAND SQUARE MILES! WHOLE CITIES WERE SWALLOWED UP BY THE ROARING INFERNO...

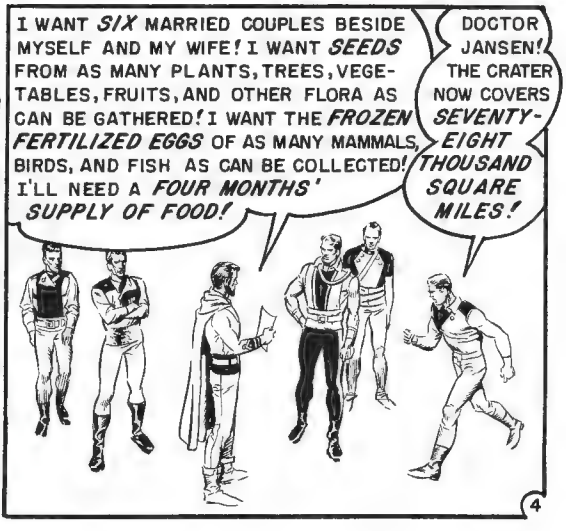


MEANWHILE, THE A.R.C.-1 HAD BEEN TURNED OVER TO THE WORLD REPUBLIC...

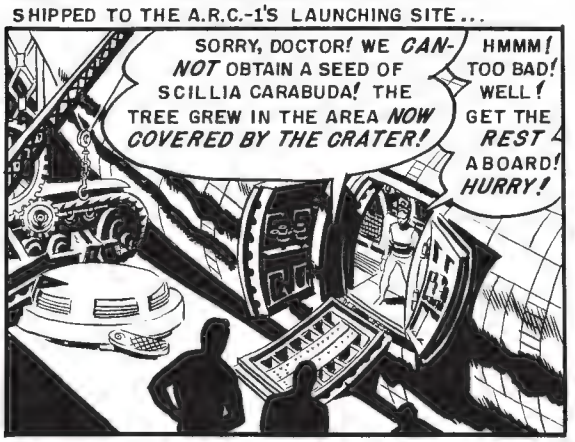

GENTLEMEN! IT IS THE DECISION OF THE WORLD CONGRESS THAT, IN AN EFFORT TO PERPETUATE LIFE ON EARTH IN THE FACE OF ITS COMPLETE ANNIHILATION, WE CHOSE SEVERAL AMONG US TO BE LAUNCHED INTO SPACE ON THE A.R.C.-1! MR. MORTON, THE PRESIDENT OF A.R.C., WHO SO GENEROUSLY CONTRIBUTED THE ROCKET SHIP, HAS RECOMMENDED THAT *DOCTOR JANSEN* BE ITS *COMMANDER!* ARE THERE ANY OBJECTIONS?

WORK ON THE COMPLETION OF THE A.R.C.-1 WAS RUSHED AT TOP SPEED...

IT'S UP TO *YOU*, DOCTOR JANSEN! HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL YOU HAVE *ROOM* FOR... AND WHAT *ELSE* WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE WITH YOU?
I HAVE THE FIGURES HERE, GENTLEMEN!


I WANT *SIX* MARRIED COUPLES BESIDE MYSELF AND MY WIFE! I WANT *SEEDS* FROM AS MANY PLANTS, TREES, VEGETABLES, FRUITS, AND OTHER FLORA AS CAN BE GATHERED! I WANT THE *FROZEN FERTILIZED EGGS* OF AS MANY MAMMALS, BIRDS, AND FISH AS CAN BE COLLECTED! I'LL NEED A *FOUR MONTHS' SUPPLY OF FOOD!*
DOCTOR JANSEN! THE CRATER NOW COVERS *SEVENTY-EIGHT THOUSAND SQUARE MILES!*
4

FROM SOLAR FARMS AND PLANT NURSERIES ACROSS THE LAND, SEEDS, SHOOTS, AND CUTTINGS OF ALL VARIETY OF FLORA GROWING ON EARTH WERE SHIPPED TO THE A.R.C.-1'S LAUNCHING SITE...


SORRY, DOCTOR! WE *CAN-NOT* OBTAIN A SEED OF SCILLIA CARABUDA! THE TREE GREW IN THE AREA *NOW COVERED BY THE CRATER!*
HMMM! TOO BAD! WELL! GET THE *REST* ABOARD! *HURRY!*

THE QUICK-FROZEN FERTILIZED EGGS OF THOUSANDS OF SPECIES OF ANIMALS, FISH, AND BIRDS WERE STORED ABOARD THE A.R.C.-1! EQUIPMENT FOR EVENTUALLY INCUBATING THESE EGGS WAS BROUGHT IN...

YOU WILL BE ABLE TO *DUPLICATE* THE *INCUBATION* OF EVERY ONE OF THESE SPECIMENS WITH THIS EQUIPMENT, DOCTOR!
GOOD! I WISH I HAD *MORE ROOM...*

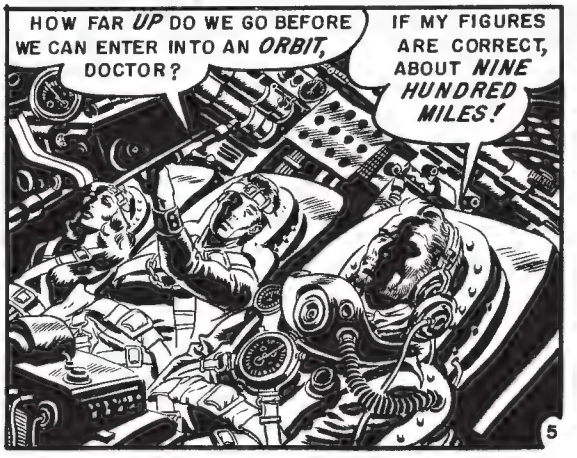
THEN THE SIX MARRIED COUPLES... CHOSEN FOR THEIR VIRILITY AND PHYSICAL VITALITY... BOARDED THE SPACE-SHIP...

MEANWHILE, THE WHOLE OF WHAT IS NOW EUROPE WAS A SEETHING MASS OF MOLTEN LAVA! THE OCEANS AT THE SHORE LINES STEAMED AND BUBBLED...

FINALLY, THE A.R.C.-1 WAS READY...

THE SECONDS TICKED OFF! THEN, FROM THE REAR ROCKET TUBES, AN INCANDESCENT BLAST OF SMOKE AND ROCKET-FLAME EXPLODED...

ON...ON...UPWARD INTO THE BLACKNESS OF SPACE, DOCTOR JANSEN'S A.R.C.-1 HURTLED...



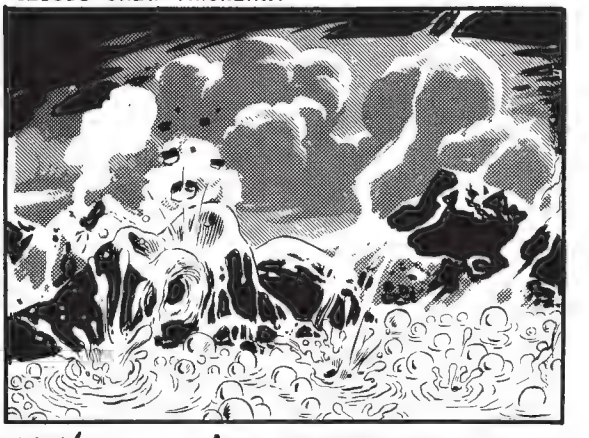
FINALLY, THAT DISTANCE ABOVE THE EARTH'S SURFACE WAS REACHED WHERE THE ROCKET SHIP HUNG...NEITHER ASCENDING NOR DESCENDING...LIKE A TINY METAL MOON...A SATELLITE...

THE LAVA COVERED TWO-THIRDS OF THE EARTH! ITS FLAMING EDGE CIRCLED THE PLANET LIKE A GIGANTIC WHITE-HOT HOOP...GROWING EVER-SMALLER NOW AS IT CLOSED IN ON THE REMAINING THIRD...

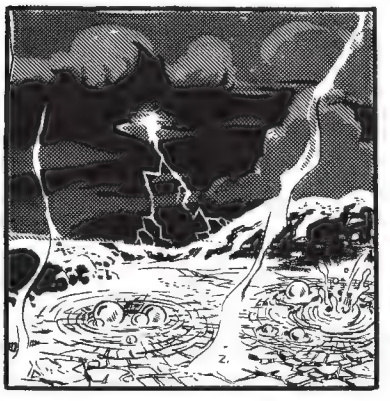
ON EARTH, MILLIONS OF DOOMED HUMANS AND ANIMALS HAD GATHERED IN THE AREA YET UNTOUCHED BY THE MOLTEN ONSLAUGHT! THEY CRUSHED EACH OTHER...TRAMPLED EACH OTHER...PUSHED...SCREAMED...HOWLED...

AND THEN THEY WERE GONE! THE RING OF DEATH CLOSED IN...AND LIFE ON EARTH WAS NO MORE! BUT HIGH OVER THE CLOUD-COVERED SURFACE...NINE HUNDRED MILES UP IN THE BLACKNESS OF SPACE...*LIFE EXISTED*...

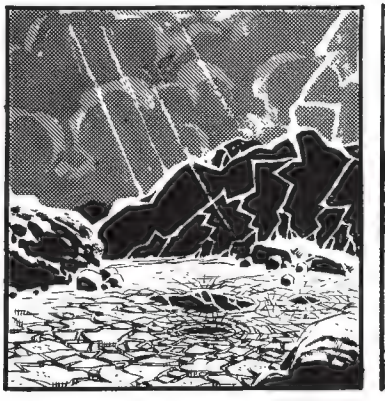
DAYS PASSED! WEEKS CRAWLED BY! A MONTH! BELOW, THE LAVA BUBBLED AND STEAMED! THE CLOUDS GREW THICKER...



TWO MONTHS! THE SEETHING MOLTEN METALS STOPPED THEIR CHURNING AND TOSSING! THE EARTH WAS BEGINNING TO COOL...



THE LAVA GREW HARD! A CRUST FORMED! THEN, FROM THE STEAM-FORMED CLOUDS, THE STORM BROKE IN ALL ITS FURY...



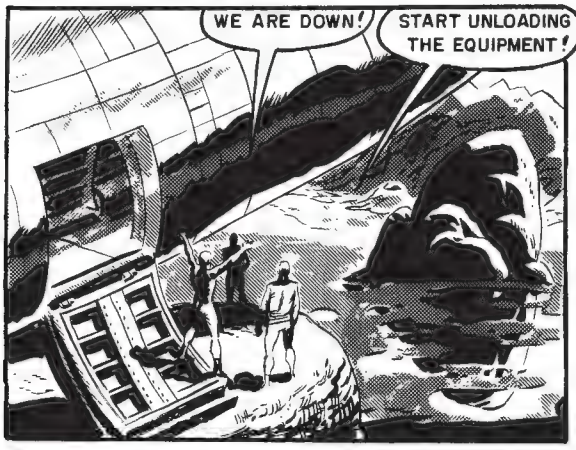
AND THE RAINS FELL...DAY AFTER DAY! AND THE EARTH COOLED! TINY RIVULETS RAN INTO BIGGER ONES...AND THE OCEANS FILLED AGAIN...

ON THE AMALGAMATED ROCKET CORPORATION'S SPACE-SHIP, DOCTOR JANSEN ADDRESSED THE SMALL GROUP...

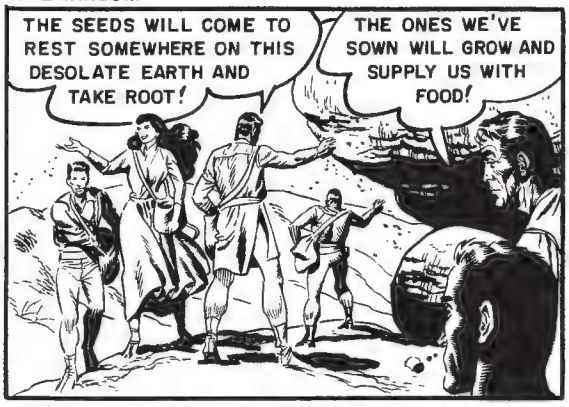
THIS HOLOCAUST WAS BROUGHT ON BY *MAN*... AND SO MAN WAS ALMOST DESTROYED BY *HIS OWN HAND!* BUT NOW MAN HAS A SECOND CHANCE! WE...YOU AND I...MUST MAKE *GOOD* ON THAT CHANCE!
YES, DOCTOR!

THE A.R.C. FIRED ITS ROCKETS AND HEADED EARTHWARD... FOR MAN'S SECOND CHANCE...

THE GLEAMING METAL MONSTER CAME TO EARTH ATOP A HIGH PLATEAU...



UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE GIGANTIC SPACECRAFT, DOCTOR JANSEN'S COLONY WAS STARTED! THE SEEDS THEY'D BROUGHT WERE SOWN! OTHERS WERE CAST TO THE WINDS...


THE SEEDS WILL COME TO REST SOMEWHERE ON THIS DESOLATE EARTH AND TAKE ROOT!
THE ONES WE'VE SOWN WILL GROW AND SUPPLY US WITH FOOD!

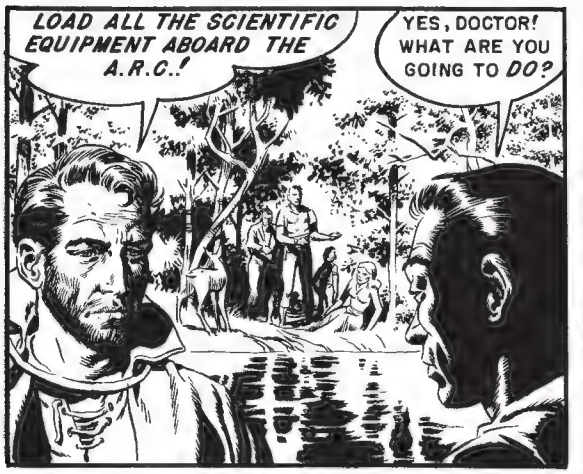
THEN THE INCUBATION EQUIPMENT WAS SET UP! THE FROZEN FERTILIZED EGGS WERE THAWED AND NURTURED UNTIL...

THE SEEDS TOOK ROOT! THE ANIMALS WERE BORN! THE FISH AND BIRDS WERE HATCHED! THE EARTH GREW GREEN AND THE SOUND OF BABIES FILLED THE COOL AIR! DOCTOR JANSEN SMILED AS HE SURVEYED THE SCENE...

IT IS *GOOD* LIKE THIS! NOT AS IT *WAS!* *SCIENCE* WAS TO BLAME FOR *MAN'S NEAR-DESTRUCTION!*

7

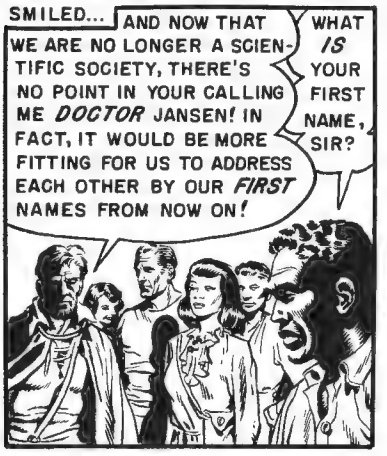
AND THEN DOCTOR JANSEN MADE UP HIS MIND...



NO, MY FRIENDS! WE WILL BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT THEM! LOOK AT US! WE ARE HAPPY NOW WITH OUR SIMPLE LIFE! SCIENCE AND SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT MEANS ONLY ONE THING! SELF-DESTRUCTION! WASN'T IT SCIENCE THAT ALMOST DESTROYED MAN ONCE BEFORE? NO! WE WILL BE BETTER OFF!

THE EXPLOSIVE CHARGES WERE SET, AND THE FUSE IGNITED! THE BLAST WAS DEAFENING...

WHEN THE SMOKE HAD CLEARED, THE A.R.C. WAS GONE! ONLY A FEW SCATTERED CHUNKS OF TWISTED METAL REMAINED! DOCTOR JANSEN SMILED...

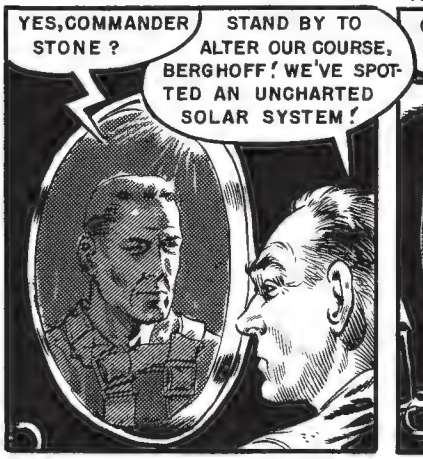

AND NOW THAT WE ARE NO LONGER A SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY, THERE'S NO POINT IN YOUR CALLING ME DOCTOR JANSEN! IN FACT, IT WOULD BE MORE FITTING FOR US TO ADDRESS EACH OTHER BY OUR FIRST NAMES FROM NOW ON!
WHAT IS YOUR FIRST NAME, SIR?

EDITORS' NOTE: AND SO, NOAH'S LITTLE GROUP BECAME A SIMPLE AGRICULTURAL PEOPLE! AND AS THEY FLOURISHED AND SPREAD OVER THE GREEN EARTH, THE SIMPLE STORY OF NOAH AND THE A.R.C. WAS TOLD AND RETOLD! BUT THROUGH THE YEARS, THE STORY CHANGED! THE PERIODS IN A.R.C. WERE DROPPED! ROCKET SHIPS WERE FORGOTTEN AS SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE DISAPPEARED! WE KNOW THE STORY TODAY! RECOGNIZE IT?

THE END

The Die is Cast!
I'VE BEEN ASKED BY THE INTERSTELLAR SPACE EXPLORATION AUTHORITY... FROM ITS HEADQUARTERS ON THE PLANET EARTH... TO SUBMIT A DETAILED REPORT ON THE DESTRUCTION OF MY ROCKET SHIP, THE PLEIADES II! I'M NOT MUCH OF A WRITER, BUT I'LL DO THE BEST I CAN! IT ALL BEGAN THE DAY THE STRANGE SOLAR SYSTEM APPEARED ON OUR RADAR-SCOPE...
IT'S ABOUT SIX LIGHT YEARS AWAY, COMMANDER STONE!
THIS IS AN UNCHARTED AREA OF THE GALAXY, SIR! I CAN'T IDENTIFY IT ON THE ASTRO-MAPS!
ONE OF THE MAIN DUTIES I HAD... AS A SHIP COMMANDER FOR THE INTERSTELLAR SPACE EXPLORATION AUTHORITY... WAS TO LOCATE, CHART, AND, IF POSSIBLE, EXPLORE NEW SOLAR SYSTEMS...
IF IT'S NOT ON THE ASTRO-MAP, BITRON, WE'LL PUT IT THERE! JENSIN! PUT ME THROUGH TO COURSE-CONTROL!
YES, SIR! RIGHT AWAY, SIR! HELLO ...HELLO? OKAY, SIR... TURN IT UP!
WOOD

I SPUN A KNOB ON THE SHIP'S INTER-TELE-COM, AND BERGHOFF OF COURSE-CONTROL CAME INTO FOCUS...



BITRON HANDED ME A SHEET OF PAPER WITH THE DISTANT SOLAR SYSTEM'S LOCATION AND I BARKED IT AT BERGHOFF...

GO AHEAD, SIR! I'M READY!
ALL RIGHT! HERE IT IS! HORIZONTAL... LEFT...SIX DEGREES, TWELVE MINUTES! VERTICAL...UP... FOUR DEGREES, SIX MINUTES!

THE SHIP SHUDDERED VIOLENTLY AS THE GYROSCOPE THAT GUIDED IT THROUGH THE VACUUM OF SPACE SUDDENLY SWUNG IT ONTO ITS NEW COURSE...

WE ENTERED THE STRANGE NEW SOLAR SYSTEM AT 1400 THE NEXT DAY! THE FIRST PLANET WE CIRCLED WAS SMALL AND BARREN...A COLD ROCK, VOID OF ATMOSPHERE...

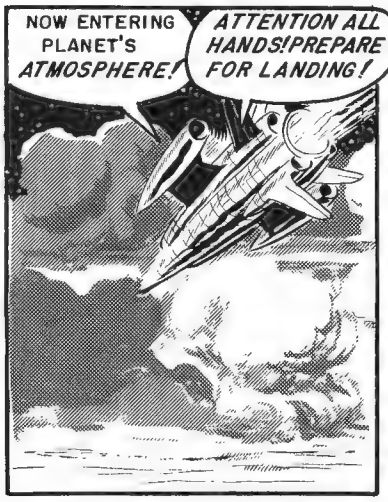
THE SECOND PLANET WAS HUGE...A HUNDRED TIMES THE SIZE OF EARTH! WE DIPPED TOWARD ITS SURFACE...

IT'S *GREEN*, SIR! HAS AN *ATMOSPHERE!* LOOKS LIKE IT *COULD* SUPPORT *LIFE!*
WE'LL COME BACK AND INVESTIGATE AFTER WE LOOK OVER THE *THIRD* PLANET!

THE THIRD PLANET WAS A LITTLE SMALLER THAN THE SECOND, AND WAS LOCATED CLOSE TO ITS SUN! AS WE NEARED IT, OUR SHIP GREW PROGRESSIVELY WARMER...

THE THIRD PLANET'S A *ROARING INFERNO*, SIR! ITS SURFACE IS A MASS OF *MOLTEN LAVA!*
NO LIFE ON *THAT* ONE! THE ONLY POSSIBILITY THAT *LIFE EXISTS* IN THIS SOLAR SYSTEM IS ON THE *HUGE GREEN* PLANET...THE *SECOND* ONE!
2

COURSE-CONTROL SWUNG THE SHIP AROUND AND WE HEADED BACK TO THE SECOND PLANET...



THE PLEIADES II WAS A HUBBUB OF ACTIVITY AS THE CREW SCRAMBLED TO THEIR DESCENT-BEDS! I STRAPPED MYSELF INTO MY OWN AND FLIPPED ON THE LANDING-CONTROL EXTENSION LOCATED OVER MY HEAD...

THE DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS OF THE SHIP REPORTED THAT LANDING PREPARATIONS WERE COMPLETE! I KEPT MY EYES GLUED TO THE BELLY TELE-SCANNER UNTIL I SIGHTED A LIKELY SET-DOWN SPOT.

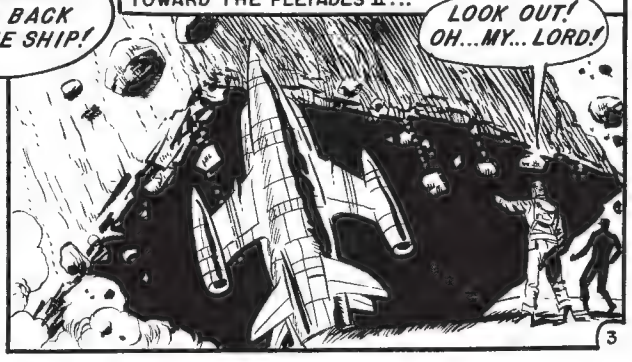
WE SLID IN, ROCKET-TUBES BLASTING, UNTIL THE SHIP CAME TO REST ON THE VAST OPEN AREA I'D CHOSEN! AS SOON AS WE WERE DOWN, I CHECKED WITH KHOLLER, OUR GEO-CHEMIST...

I WAS RELIEVED! EXPLORING WITH THOSE CUMBERSOME SPACE SUITS WAS A TIRING JOB! WITHOUT THEM, THE WORK WOULD BE SO MUCH EASIER...

WE'D LANDED ON A LARGE OPEN PLAIN! ITS SURFACE WAS COVERED WITH A FINE GREEN FUZZ NOT UNLIKE YOUNG GRASS! KHOLLER AND I TRUDGED ACROSS IT TOWARD THE HIGH PALISADES THAT BORDERED IT! AS WE REACHED THE HUGE TOWERING CLIFFS...

THESE CLIFFS LOOK ABOUT FOUR MILES HIGH! THEY GO STRAIGHT UP! HOW IN BLAZES ARE WE GOING TO CLIMB...
COMMANDER! LOOK BACK AT THE SHIP!

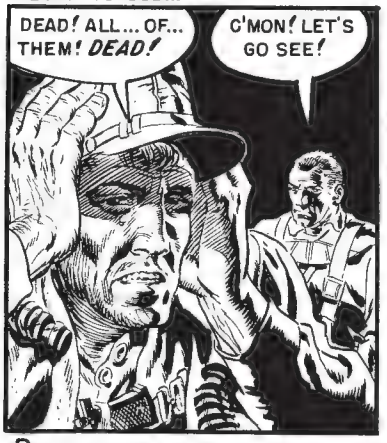
I SPUN AROUND AT KHOLLER'S SHOUT OF DISMAY! WE WERE ABOUT SIX HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE SHIP! I FELT A PANG OF COLD HORROR SWEEP OVER ME! A TREMENDOUS BLOCK OF STONE... SO HIGH THAT I COULD SCARCELY MAKE OUT THE TOP OF IT... THUNDERED END OVER END TOWARD THE PLEIADES II...



BLOOD CURDLING SCREAMS OF PAIN ECHOED ACROSS THE GREEN PLAIN AS THE TREMENDOUS ROCK CRUSHED THE SHIP BENEATH IT...

IT ROLLED TO A STOP ABOUT A HALF A MILE AWAY! BEHIND IT, THE ROCK LEFT A TRAIL OF WRECKAGE AND CRUSHED BODIES SCATTERED OVER THE GREEN FUZZ...

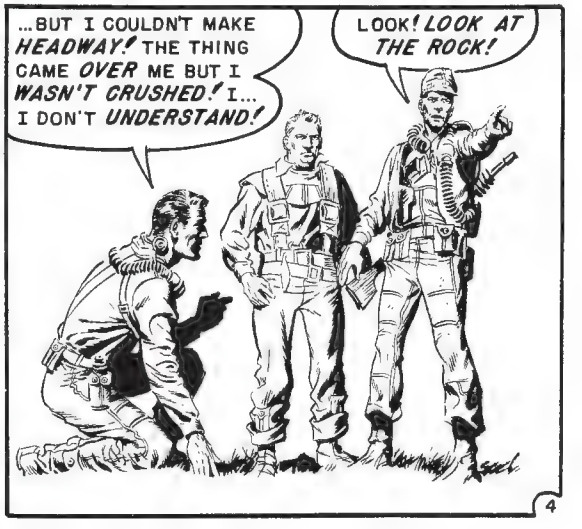
THE SHIP WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED! I STOOD THERE, HORRIFIED! I COULDN'T SPEAK! KHOLLER BEGAN TO SOB...



WE DASHED ACROSS THE HARD SURFACE OF THE PLAIN TOWARD THE CHAOTIC SCENE! THE CRUSHED BODIES OF THE MEN LAY CRAZILY ABOUT THE SPLINTERED SMASHED SHIP...

IT WAS SOMEONE CALLING US! ABOUT A HUNDRED YARDS AWAY, A FIGURE STIRRED...

BITRON GOT TO HIS KNEES AS WE APPROACHED...

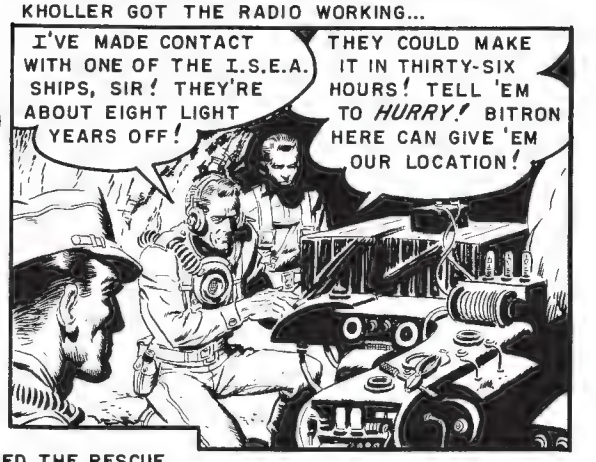


THE ROCK TOWERED ABOVE US! ABOUT HALFWAY UP ITS SHEER REDDISH FACE, A HUGE CAVERN YAWNED...
SEE? SEE THAT HOLLOW SPOT... THERE... THAT WHITISH HOLE?
YES! I SEE IT! IT SEEMS TO BE A CRATER!
YOU CAN THANK YOUR STARS IT WAS THERE!
YOU MEAN...!
THAT CRATER MUST HAVE PASSED DIRECTLY OVER YOU! THAT'S WHY YOU WEREN'T CRUSHED!
SUDDENLY THE PLANET'S SUN WAS BLOTTED OUT! I LOOKED UP...
GOOD LORD! THERE'S SOMETHING UP THERE! IT'S COMING OVER THE CLIFFS!
THE HUGE SHAPE LOOMED HIGH OVER OUR HEADS! THEN IT DISAPPEARED BACK BEHIND THE PALISADES...
THE ROCK!
IT'S GONE!
THE MOUNTAINOUS ROCK THAT HAD CRUSHED MY SHIP AND KILLED ALL BUT TWO OF MY CREW WAS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN! IT HAD VANISHED WITH THE BLOTTING OUT OF THE PLANET'S SUN...
LISTEN!
RUMBLING!
KHOLLER GASPED AND POINTED! FAR ACROSS THE GREEN PLAIN, TWO MOUNTAINOUS ROCKS THUNDERED TOWARD US! THE NOISE WAS DEAFENING...
TWO OF THEM, NOW!
RUN! RUN FOR THE CLIFFS!
WE REACHED THE CLIFFS JUST IN TIME! THE TREMENDOUS THINGS SLAMMED BY US! I COULD SEE THEIR ANGRY RED COLOR AND THE GRAY-WHITE CRATERS...
JUST MISSED!
COMMANDER! DO YOU THINK THOSE MOUNTAINOUS THINGS ARE ALIVE?
I DON'T KNOW, BITRON! I DON'T KNOW!
5

SOMEHOW OR OTHER, BETWEEN ONSLAUGHTS FROM THOSE MOVING MOUNTAINS OF ROCK, KHOLLER AND I MANAGED TO DASH BACK AND FORTH FROM THE FLATTENED SHIP...SALVAGING WHAT WE COULD! WE'D FOUND A CREVICE IN THE CLIFFS...AND HAD HIDDEN THERE...

I THINK I CAN REPAIR THE *INTER-STELLAR RADIO,* COMMANDER! I CAN USE THE INTER-TELE-COM PARTS TO *FILL IN!*
GO AHEAD! *TRY IT!* OTHERWISE WE'LL BE *DODGING* THOSE THINGS TILL WE *STARVE TO DEATH!*

THE THUNDERING RED MOUNTAINS MADE A FEW ATTACKS, BUT THE CREVICE HELD! FINALLY, KHOLLER GOT THE RADIO WORKING...


I'VE MADE CONTACT WITH ONE OF THE I.S.E.A. SHIPS, SIR! THEY'RE ABOUT EIGHT LIGHT YEARS OFF!
THEY COULD MAKE IT IN THIRTY-SIX HOURS! TELL 'EM TO *HURRY!* BITRON HERE CAN GIVE 'EM OUR LOCATION!

BITRON RELAYED THE INFORMATION TO OUR RESCUERS, AND WE WAITED! MEANWHILE, THE MOUNTAINOUS BLOCKS KEPT COMING AGAIN AND AGAIN! FINALLY, THE SHIP APPEARED...

KHOLLER WARNED THE RESCUE SHIP ABOUT THE HUGE ROCKS THAT KEPT ATTACKING US AS IT CAME IN...

THE THINGS THUNDERED TOWARD US AS WE SCRAMBLED INTO THE RESCUE SHIP! WE GOT ABOARD AND BLASTED OFF BEFORE THEY REACHED US! THEY ROLLED HARMLESSLY BENEATH OUR RISING SHIP...

I STUDIED THE LETHAL, THUNDERING, MOUNTAINOUS BLOCKS ON THE REAR TELE-SCANNER AS WE ROSE UPWARD FROM THE CLIFF-LINED, GREEN PLAIN! SUDDENLY, I NOTICED SOMETHING...SOMETHING *STRANGE!* AS THEY ROLLED TO A STOP FAR BELOW US...I GASPED...

YES! THE WHITE CRATERS *WERE* ARRANGED! *SIX* ON ONE FACE! *FIVE* ON ANOTHER! *FOUR... THREE...TWO...*AND *ONE!* AS WE ROSE HIGHER AND HIGHER, THE PICTURE BECAME *CLEARER!* THOSE *REDDISH BLOCKS* WITH THE *WHITE CRATERS* WERE *DICE...*

AS WE LEFT THE PLANET'S SURFACE FAR BEHIND US, I COULD MAKE OUT A GIGANTIC ALIEN MONSTER REACHING FOR THE HUGE BLOCKS, PICKING THEM UP, AND TOSSING THEM ONCE MORE OVER THE SMOOTH GREEN PLAIN...WHILE SNAPPING ITS TENTACLES! FUNNY THING...HE *CRAPPED OUT!*

THE WIND-UP TO THIS SCIENCE FICTION YARN SHOULD GIVE YOU QUITE A JOLT...!

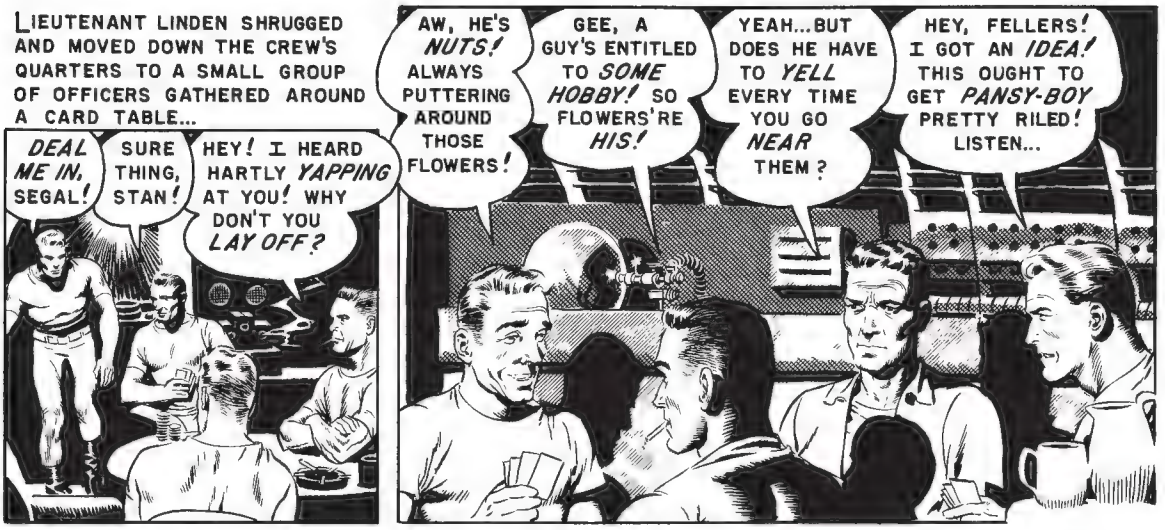
GEE, DAD... IT'S A DAISY!!

LIEUTENANT STANLEY LINDEN, ASTRO-NAVIGATOR OF THE EXPLORATION ROCKET SHIP *ORION-W*, EYED THE OBLONG CONTAINER HALF-FILLED WITH SOIL THAT RESTED BENEATH THE GLOWING INFRA-RED TUBE! NEAR HIM, LIEUTENANT ARNOLD HARTLY, ROCKET ENGINEER, BUSIED HIMSELF WITH ANOTHER CONTAINER, THIS ONE FILLED WITH FLOWERS...

LIEUTENANT LINDEN MOVED TO LIEUTENANT HARTLY'S SIDE AND WATCHED AS ARNOLD CAREFULLY PRUNED THE FLOWERING PLANT HE HAD CULTIVATED...

BOY! YOU CERTAINLY ARE *BUGS* ON THESE THINGS, HARTLY! WHAT'S *THIS* ONE CALLED?
DON'T TOUCH! THAT'S A SHASTA DAISY! *LOOK*, STAN! I'VE TOLD YOU OVER AND OVER! *DON'T TOUCH THE FLOWERS!*
1.

LIEUTENANT LINDEN SHRUGGED AND MOVED DOWN THE CREW'S QUARTERS TO A SMALL GROUP OF OFFICERS GATHERED AROUND A CARD TABLE...

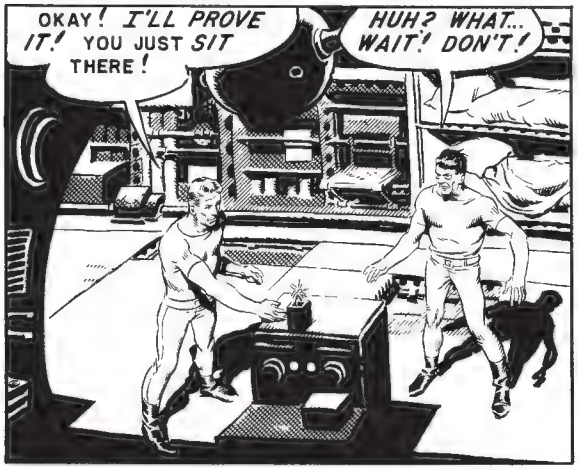

DEAL ME IN, SEGAL!
SURE THING, STAN!
HEY! I HEARD HARTLY YAPPING AT YOU! WHY DON'T YOU LAY OFF?
AW, HE'S NUTS! ALWAYS PUTTERING AROUND THOSE FLOWERS!
GEE, A GUY'S ENTITLED TO SOME HOBBY! SO FLOWERS'RE HIS!
YEAH...BUT DOES HE HAVE TO YELL EVERY TIME YOU GO NEAR THEM?
HEY, FELLERS! I GOT AN IDEA! THIS OUGHT TO GET PANSY-BOY PRETTY RILED! LISTEN...

LIEUTENANT HARTLY TURNED FROM WATERING HIS TINY GARDEN, AS THE VOICES AT THE CARD TABLE ROSE...

AW, HOW DO YOU KNOW, STAN? SHE'S PROBABLY FORGOTTEN YOU!
NOT THIS BABE! SHE WAS CRAZY ABOUT ME!
'WAS' IS RIGHT! NINE MONTHS IS A LONG TIME TO BE GONE!
SHE'S PROBABLY COOLED OFF BY NOW!

LIEUTENANT LINDEN GOT TO HIS FEET ANGRILY...

LIEUTENANT LINDEN DARTED ACROSS THE CREW'S QUARTERS TOWARD LIEUTENANT HARTLY...



LIEUTENANT LINDEN TORE THE SHASTA DAISY FROM LIEUTENANT HARTLY'S FLOWER BOX AS THE OTHERS COVERED THEIR MOUTHS TO KEEP FROM LAUGHING...

STANLEY LINDEN DANCED ABOUT THE CREW'S QUARTERS PLUCKING THE PETALS FROM THE DAISY AS ARNOLD HARTLY STUMBLED AFTER HIM... SHOUTING AT HIM...

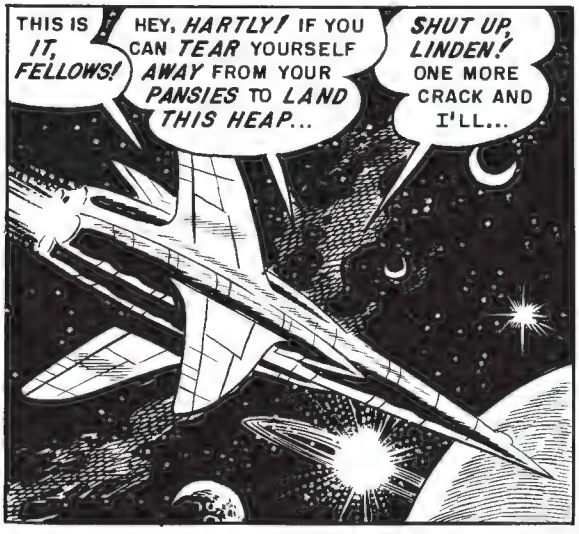
FINALLY LIEUTENANT LINDEN HELD UP THE PLUCKED FLOWER! ONLY ONE PETAL REMAINED...

LIEUTENANT HARTLY SNATCHED THE MANGLED FLOWER FROM HIS ANTAGONIST'S HAND AND CARRIED IT TENDERLY TO HIS BUNK WHERE HE PLACED IT IN A GLASS OF WATER...

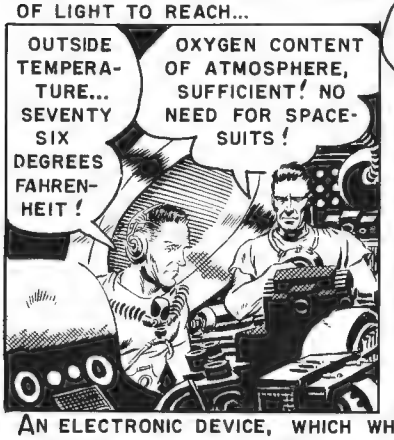
LIEUTENANT HARTLY SPUN AROUND RED-FACED! HE GLARED AT HIS GRINNING MOCKERS...

GO AHEAD! LAUGH! MAKE FUN! THAT'S THE WAY I FEEL! FLOWERS AND PLANTS ARE ALIVE! JUST BECAUSE THEY DON'T CRY OUT DOESN'T MEAN THEY DON'T FEEL PAIN!
AW, CAN IT, HARTLY!
ATTENTION, ALL HANDS!

IT'S THE OLD MAN!
SH-H-H!
REPORT TO YOUR STATIONS! WE ARE APPROACHING OUR DESTINATION! SYNCHRONIZE WATCHES! TIME NOW... 2145! LANDING TIME... 0215!


THIS IS IT, FELLOWS!
HEY, HARTLY! IF YOU CAN TEAR YOURSELF AWAY FROM YOUR PANSIES TO LAND THIS HEAP...
SHUT UP, LINDEN! ONE MORE CRACK AND I'LL...

AT 0215 EARTH TIME, THE ORION-W CAME TO REST ON THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET THAT HAD REQUIRED NINE MONTHS OF HURTLING ACROSS THE VOID OF SPACE AT TEN TIMES THE SPEED OF LIGHT TO REACH...



SOON A PORT IN THE SIDE OF THE GIANT STEEL MONSTER OPENED AND A LADDER UNFURLED! ONE BY ONE, THE SPACE-EXPLORERS DESCENDED...

THE ORION-W HAD LANDED IN AN OPEN FIELD SURROUNDED BY A THICK WALL OF STRANGE VEGETATION...

YOU'RE *RIGHT*, SIR! LOOK! *THERE'S* ONE OF THE CREATURES *NOW!*
DICKSON! GET THE *AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR* DOWN HERE! LET'S SEE IF THESE THINGS ARE *INTELLIGENT!*

AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE, WHICH WHEN PROPERLY SET COULD TRANSLATE ALIEN THOUGHTS AND SPEECH INTO ENGLISH, WAS LOWERED FROM THE SHIP...

THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR WAS ADJUSTED AND READJUSTED WITH NO RESULTS! FINALLY...

OKAY, DICKSON! FORGET IT! PERHAPS WE'LL FIND AN INTELLIGENT FORM OF ANIMAL LIFE WHEN WE BEGIN OUR EXPLORING! NOW, LET'S SET UP A CAMP!
HOT DOG! WE SLEEP IN THE *OPEN* TONIGHT! THAT'S A WELCOME CHANGE FROM BEING COOPED UP IN THE SHIP!

BY THE TIME THE SPACE TRAVELERS HAD SET UP THEIR PLASTO-TENTS, DARKNESS HAD CREPT ACROSS THE ALIEN PLANET'S SKY! IT WAS TOO LATE TO DO ANY EXPLORING, SO...

BUT AS MORNING DAWNED OVER THE STRANGE TERRAIN...

COMMANDER MORRIS, OFFICER-IN-CHARGE OF THE ORION-W, CAME OUT OF HIS PLASTO-TENT AND LOOKED AROUND AT THE FACES OF HIS MEN, NOW PALED WITH FEAR...

PERHAPS HE WANDERED OFF! LET'S LOOK FOR HIM!
ALL RIGHT! HARTLY! YOU STAY HERE AND GUARD THE SHIP! LINDEN... YOU TOO!
THE REST COME WITH ME!

AS THE SEARCH PARTY STARTED OFF TOWARD THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING, HARTLY GASPED...

LIEUTENANT LINDEN FOLLOWED LIEUTENANT HARTLY'S STARE...

GO ON! YOU'RE NUTS! WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME, 'MACBETH'... THAT THE TREES ARE MOVING IN?
I COULD SWEAR THE FOLIAGE WAS FURTHER AWAY YESTERDAY!

SUDDENLY THE SEARCHING PARTY STOPPED AT THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING! THEY WERE STUDYING SOMETHING ON THE GROUND...

HARTLY AND LINDEN SPRINTED ACROSS THE OPEN FIELD TOWARD WHERE THE SEARCH PARTY HAD STOPPED! SEGAL...OR WHAT WAS LEFT OF HIM... LAY BEFORE THEM...

THEY BURIED LIEUTENANT SEGAL'S REMAINS AND RETURNED TO CAMP! THAT NIGHT, DOUBLE GUARDS WERE POSTED! THEN, TOWARDS MORNING, LIEUTENANT HARTLY WAS AWAKENED BY A CRACKLING SOUND...

LIEUTENANT LINDEN LEAPED OFF HIS AIR-COT AND OPENED THE FLAP OF HIS PLASTO-TENT! OUTSIDE IT WAS PITCH BLACK! SUDDENLY, THE DARKNESS WAS KNIFED BY TWO EAR-SPLITTING SHRIEKS...

THE NIGHT WAS FILLED WITH A THRASHING AND RUSTLING! LIEUTENANT LINDEN SHOUTED TO LIEUTENANT HARTLY...

THE YELLOW-AMBER BEAM OF THE SODIUM LAMP PUNCHED THROUGH THE INKY BLACKNESS SURROUNDING THE CAMP! NOTHING COULD BE SEEN! THE CLEARING WAS BARE...

LINDEN AND HARTLY AND COMMANDER MORRIS STARED AT EACH OTHER, THEIR FACES GHOSTLY IN THE SODIUM LAMP'S GOLD LIGHT...

WHAT IS IT, HARTLY?
I WAS AWAKENED BY STATIC AND CRACKLING COMING FROM THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR! IT'S STOPPED, NOW!
ARNOLD'S RIGHT, SIR! THE THING OR THINGS THAT ATTACKED THIS CAMP WERE INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATIVE CREATURES!

THE CRACKLING STATIC STARTED AGAIN...

HARTLY BENT OVER THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR, SPINNING DIALS... FLICKING SWITCHES! SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A FAINT RUSTLING BEYOND THE CAMP...IN THE DARKNESS! A SNAKE-LIKE FORM REACHED INTO THE CIRCLE OF LIGHT CAST BY THE SODIUM LAMP AND WRAPPED ITSELF AROUND COMMANDER MORRIS'S LEG...

HARTLY AND LINDEN WATCHED, HORRIFIED, AS THE COMMANDER WAS DRAGGED TO THE BASE OF THE STRANGE FOLIAGE THAT HAD CLOSED IN ON THE CLEARING...

THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN WAS SWALLOWED UP IN THE POD-LIKE STRUCTURE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ALIEN PLANT! LATER, HIS DRIED AND SHRIVELED BODY WAS DISGORGED...

HARTLY AND LINDEN STARTED FOR THE SHIP! IN HIS HASTE, LINDEN STUMBLED OVER THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR...

THE MACHINE TOPPLED OVER AND LINDEN WENT SPRAWLING! THE CRACKLING STATIC WAS CUT SHORT, AND SHRILL HIGH-PITCHED VOICES RASPED FROM THE ELECTRONIC TRANSLATOR...

LIEUTENANT LINDEN STRUGGLED TO HIS FEET AND STUMBLED FORWARD! CURLING THROBBING ROOTS SHOT OUT FROM THE FOLIAGE BEHIND HIM, ENCIRCLING HIS LEGS... HIS ARMS...

LIEUTENANT HARTLY STARTED TOWARD HIS TRAPPED FELLOW SPACE EXPLORER... THEN STOPPED! HE WATCHED IN HORROR AS LIEUTENANT LINDEN WAS LIFTED HIGH INTO THE AIR BY THE SWIRLING, CLUTCHING ROOT-VINES...

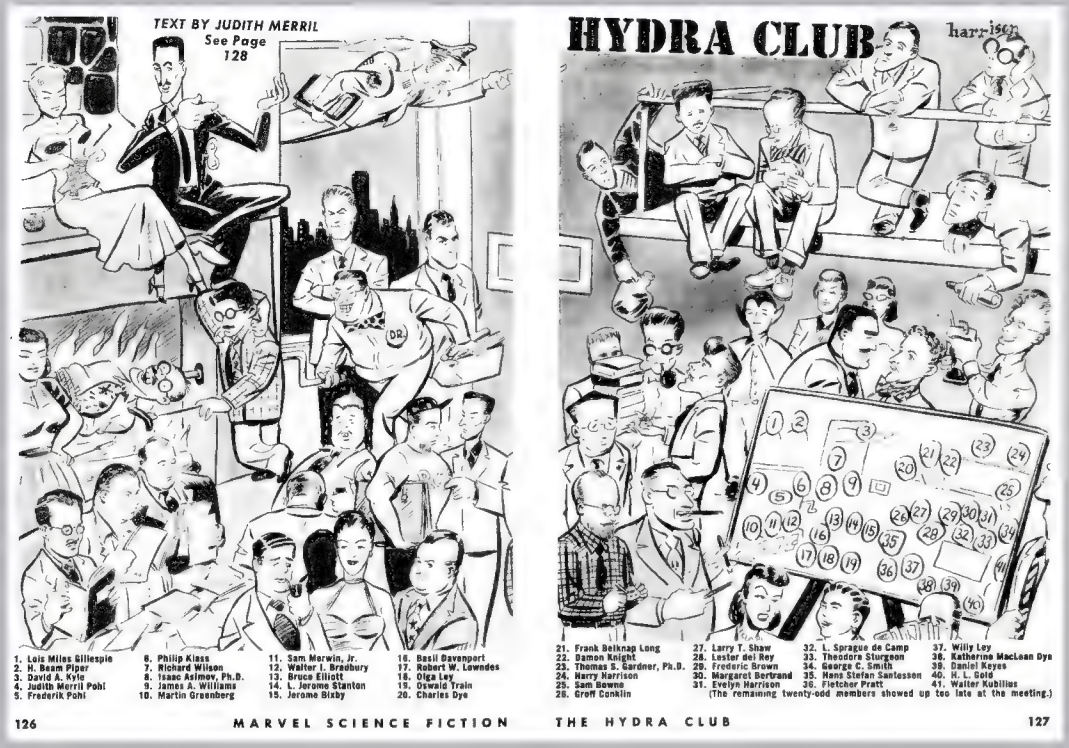
HARTLY TURNED HIS HEAD AND COVERED HIS EYES TO HIDE THE GORY SIGHT, BUT LIEUTENANT LINDEN'S HYSTERICAL BLOOD-CURDLING SHRIEKS CONTINUED AS THE VINE-ROOTS TORE HIS ARMS AND LEGS FROM HIS BODY, ONE BY ONE! THE SHRILL VOICE FROM THE ELECTRONIC TRANSLATOR WAS QUITE AUDIBLE...

THE ENIGMA OF HARRISON, THE ARTIST

In the following pages are the four science fiction stories that Wallace Wood and Harry Harrison produced together for EC, along with Harrison's only solo EC science fiction job.

About a year after he stopped drawing comic book stories with Wood, Harrison contributed a two-page illustration to the November 1951 issue of *Marvel Science Fiction* showing a holiday-season party of the Hydra Club, a New York City–based "organization of professional science-fiction writers, artists and editors." Everyone is dressed to the nines, the women in cocktail dresses, the men in tweed jackets and tailor-made suits. Writer Judith Merril stands by the fireplace, where her husband Frederik Pohl is turning on a spit. Harrison's wife at the time, Evelyn, is also part of the gathering. Of special interest to EC fans are historian Fletcher Pratt and picto-fiction writer Daniel Keyes. A youthful Harry Harrison, clean-shaven and wearing thick horn-rim glasses, lounges on a balcony.

Harrison is good at catching likenesses and capturing personalities. Everything is "right the first time." Nothing is tentative or unsure. The space in the room is fluently realized: nothing cartoony or comic-booky here. Who knows what Harrison might have done in this line had he not become a full-time writer?



HOW MANY OF US HAVE HAD DREAMS, SO REAL, THAT WE AWAKE WITH A START AND ARE SURPRISED TO FIND WE WERE ONLY DREAMING? ARE YOUR DREAMS LIFE-LIKE? HOW DO YOU KNOW EVEN AT THIS VERY INSTANT THAT YOU ARE NOT DREAMING!! WHAT YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING RIGHT NOW MAY BE ONLY A DREAM... A FIGMENT OF YOUR IMAGINATION!
THIS WAS THE PARADOX FACING ARTHUR BRISTOL! WAS HE AWAKE OR WAS HE DREAMING? WHAT DID HE FIND AT THE END OF HIS...
DREAM OF DOOM
GOOD LORD! WHEN WILL THIS END? IS THIS REALLY HAPPENING TO ME OR IS IT A DREAM? HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO GO ON LIKE THIS BEFORE I FIND OUT WHERE I AM?
WHUFF! MUST HAVE DOZED OFF! BRR! WHAT A DREAM!
NOW JUST RELAX, MR. BRISTOL. DR. FROYD WILL BE IN TO INTERVIEW YOU IN A MOMENT!
WELL, MR. BRISTOL, IF YOU'RE RELAXED, TELL ME YOUR STORY! YOU DON'T HAVE TO RUSH! JUST TAKE YOUR TIME!
I...I HARDLY KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN! I GUESS THERE JUST ISN'T ANY BEGINNING!

YOU SEE, DOCTOR--- I CAN'T WAKE UP! I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO WAKE UP! I'M CONSTANTLY DREAMING!
WELL, MY GOOD MAN... AREN'T YOU AWAKE NOW? AREN'T YOU TALKING TO ME? I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
RING
DON'T YOU SEE? EVEN NOW, I MAY BE DREAMING! EVEN YOU MAY BE PART OF MY DREAM! YOU MAY BE A NOTHING... A FIGMENT OF MY IMAGINATION!
NOW, EASY THERE... JUST RELAX! LET US TRY TO BE CALM ABOUT THIS!
RINGG
NOW LET US GO BACK TO THE EARLIEST POINT YOU CAN RECOLLECT. WHEN DID YOU START HAVING THESE DREAMS, AND WERE YOU IN LOVE AT THE TIME...?
I TOLD YOU, DOCTOR, THERE IS NO BEGINNING... NO END! HOW CAN... GOOD LORD... CAN'T YOU DO SOMTHING ABOUT THAT PHONE? ANSWER IT OR SHUT IT UP!
BRRRINNG
RINGG
RING
RINGG
BRRRRINNG
RINNNG
RINGGG
BRRRRINNG
ZZ... SHUDUP PHONE... WHA... HUH...
WAKE UP!
RING
RINGG
BRRRINNNG
ARTHUR! IT'S LIKE WAKING THE DEAD TO WAKE YOU! DON'T YOU HEAR THE ALARM?
WHU... HMP... IT WAS A DREAM AFTER ALL! WHAT A NIGHT... NIGHTMARES... FOOF... WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST, DEAR?
...AND THAT'S THE KIND OF DREAM I WAS HAVING! I THOUGHT I'D NEVER WAKE UP!
WELL, I HOPE YOU'RE WIDE AWAKE ENOUGH TO REMEMBER THE EARLY APPOINTMENT YOU HAD WITH YOUR PUBLISHER! YOU TOLD ME TO WAKE YOU EXTRA EARLY THIS MORNING SO THAT YOU COULD BRING YOUR DRAWINGS RIGHT DOWNTOWN!
GOOD LORD! LOOK AT THE TIME. I'LL HAVE TO HURRY, KID, IF I EXPECT TO GET DOWNTOWN ON TIME! I THINK I'LL TAKE A CAB!
2

MORNING, MR. BRISTOL! MR. BAINES HAS BEEN EXPECTING YOU! GO RIGHT IN!
THANKS, PEGGY!
Gill Baines PUBLISHER
PRIVATE
SO, YOU'RE HERE AT LAST! WE'VE BEEN HOLDING UP PRODUCTION ON ONE WHOLE ISSUE WAITING FOR YOUR SKETCHES. COME HERE AND LAY THEM ON THE TABLE...I WANT TO SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
SORRY I COULDN'T GET HERE SOONER G.B., BUT I'VE BEEN HAVING THE MOST AWFUL TIMES TRYING TO SLEEP...
8-BALL COMICS
HMMM...WONDERFUL... THESE DRAWINGS ARE FANTASTICALLY WONDERFUL! YOU DID A FINE JOB! I MUST SHOW THESE TO THE OTHER ARTISTS! WINDSOR... NEWTON...COME IN HERE A MOMENT, PLEASE!
I HAVEN'T SEEN SUCH STUFF SINCE "STEEL CANYON"!
...OR EVEN "KING VALIENT"!
CLAP
AWWW... IT WAS NOTHING!
...NOTHIN' 'TALL... IT...ZZZ...
ARTHUR!
OH, ARTHUR...WAKE UP..YOU'VE BEEN SLEEPING AND MUMBLING ALL THROUGH THE FIRST ACT OF A PERFECTLY MARVELOUS PLAY! I WARNED YOU NOT TO WORK LATE LAST NIGHT...NOW WAKE UP! IT'S INTERMISSION TIME...I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO THE LOBBY!
WHA...WHERE THE HECK...
GOOD LORD...NOT AGAIN... NO...NO...IT WAS ALL A DREAM! A DREAM... I'VE BEEN DREAMING ALL THE TIME!
ARTHUR, PLEASE! EVERYONE IS STARING AT US! LOWER YOUR VOICE! COME ON, WE'LL TAKE A STROLL AROUND THE LOBBY, AND I'M SURE YOU'LL FEEL BETTER AFTER YOU'VE STRAIGHTENED OUT!
3

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT...
WELL, I CAN! WHAT DO YOU EXPECT...WE HAD A VERY SPICY MEAL AT THE FRENCH RESTAURANT, AND YOU ATE THAT SMELLY ROQUEFORT CHEESE! THEN YOU FALL ASLEEP DURING THE FIRST ACT OF THE PLAY! AFTER SUCH A MEAL, IT'S A WONDER YOU DON'T GET A FIT OF INDIGESTION, MUCH LESS NIGHTMARES!
BUT I TELL YOU IT WAS REAL... AS REAL AS WE ARE STANDING HERE! I REMEMBER EVERY DETAIL...I KEPT GOING FROM ONE DREAM INTO ANOTHER AND INTO ANOTHER! IT'S THE CRAZIEST THING YOU EVER HEARD OF!
WE-L-L-LL, YOU'LL GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP TONIGHT, AND YOU WON'T HAVE ANYMORE NIGHT-MARES, DEAR!
HERE, ARTHUR, COME TAKE A BREATH OF THIS NICE COLD AIR. IT'LL HELP CLEAR YOUR HEAD! HURRY UP...THERE'S THE SIGNAL FOR THE END OF THE INTERMISSION, AND THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND ACT!
I DON'T KNOW...I... JUST DON'T KNOW.
EXIT
BUZZZZZZZ
CURTAIN GOING UP, LADIES AND GENTLE-MEN! CURTAIN GOING UP!
WELL, LET'S GET BACK!
GOING UP! GOING UP-
BUZZ
BUZZZZZZZ
GOING UP, MISTER?
HERE I AM WAITING FOR YOU TO GO UP AND YOU JUST STAND THERE PRESSING THE "UP" BUZZER! ARE YOU GOING UP OR AIN'T YOU GOING UP?
BZZZZ
UP? OH YES...LOST IN A DAYDREAM FOR A MOMENT I GUESS...LEMME SEE...WHERE AM I? ON MY WAY TO THE STUDIO... THAT'S IT! BOY, AM I GETTING DOPEY THESE DAYS...WALK AROUND IN A TRANCE! I'LL HAVE TO CUT OUT THESE ALL-NIGHT DEAD-LINES...I'LL BE WALKING INTO A STREET-CAR NEXT THING!
IF YOU'RE GOING UP, GO...IF YOU'RE STAYING DOWN, STAY!
EIGHT, PLEASE!
MY MIND HAS CERTAINLY BEEN WANDERING...DREAMS... BAH! NOW I'VE GOT TO GET DOWN TO WORK, SERIOUSLY! I WONDER IF ANY OF THE BOYS ARE IN THE STUDIO?
4

BILL WILL GET A KICK HEARING ABOUT THE SILLY DREAMS I HAD...HUH ? IT LOOKS LIKE BILL'S ARRIVED AHEAD OF ME !
CARTOONISTS INC.
ART BRISTOL
BILL KURTZ
MORNING, BILL ! SAY, HAVE I GOT A LOONEY STORY TO TELL YOU ! I WAS WALKING TO WORK TODAY... AND MY MIND WANDERED OFF INTO THE DIPPIEST DAY DREAM ! IT WAS AS IF I KEPT WAKING AND DREAMING AT THE SAME TIME... HEY...
HMPH
...WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU THIS MORNING ? WHAT ARE YOU SO SOUR ABOUT ? FALL OUT OF BED ON THE WRONG SIDE ?
DON'T GIVE ME NONE OF YOUR WISE-CRACKS THIS MORNING ! I CAME IN HERE AND THE PLACE IS A MESS WITH YOUR WORK THROWN ALL OVER THE PLACE, AND TWO OF MY BRUSHES ARE MISSING !
NAZRAT
LOOK, I CAME IN HERE AND TALKED ABOUT MY DREAM ! THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO GET EXCITED AND TO MAKE INSINUATIONS...
HAH ! YOUR DREAM ! THAT WASN'T YOUR DREAM ! IT WAS AN IDEA YOU SAW ME DRAW LAST MONTH ! NOW YOU SWIPE IT AND SAY YOU INVENTED IT IN YOUR DREAM...
YOU... YOU TALK ABOUT SWIPING ! LOOK AT YOUR DRAWINGS ! COPIES ! SWIPED PICTURE FOR PICTURE FROM THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, COLLIER'S... NEW YORKER ! PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN GLASS HOUSES SHOULDN'T THROW BRICKS !
HEY, WATCH IT ! WHOSE DRAWINGS DO YOU THINK YOU'RE HANDLING ! YOU PICK THAT DRAWING OFF THE FLOOR BEFORE I KNOCK YOU DOWN THERE TO KEEP IT COMPANY !
COME ONE STEP CLOSER BOY, AND I'LL KNOCK YOU FLAT WITH THIS T-SQUARE !
YOU JUST TOUCH ME WITH THAT T-SQUARE, AND I'LL CHEW YOU UP... AN THEN I'LL CHEW UP THE PIECES !
CRACK !
5

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT!
WHACK!
WHUP-!
DEAR LORD... I DIDN'T MEAN FOR THIS TO HAPPEN...
WHAM
TINKLE
CRASH!
TINKLE
TINKLE
TINKLE
TINKLE
WHA...WHAT'S THIS? NO...NO...DON'T TELL ME I'VE BEEN DREAMING ALL THE WHILE! SOMEBODY TELL ME! GOOD HEAVENS! I'VE WRECKED THE CAR! EVERYONE'S DEAD! MY WIFE...MY FAMILY! MUST GET OUT...MUST GET HELP...
WINDOW... DIDN'T SEE WINDOW...
MUST HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL! A MAN SURE CAN DREAM A DEVIL OF A LOT IN JUST A MOMENT...MUST HAVE DOZED JUST FOR AN INSTANT! BUT THIS ISN'T A DREAM...MUST GET HELP RIGHT AWAY...
I THINK I'M DYING! PLEASE CALL FOR HELP..FELL ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL! HELP..RIGHT AWAY...
TAKE IT EASY YOUNG FELLER! LIE BACK... YOU MIGHT HAVE BROKEN BONES AND YOU MUSTN'T MOVE! I'LL CALL TOWN FOR AN AMBULANCE RIGHT AWAY!
6

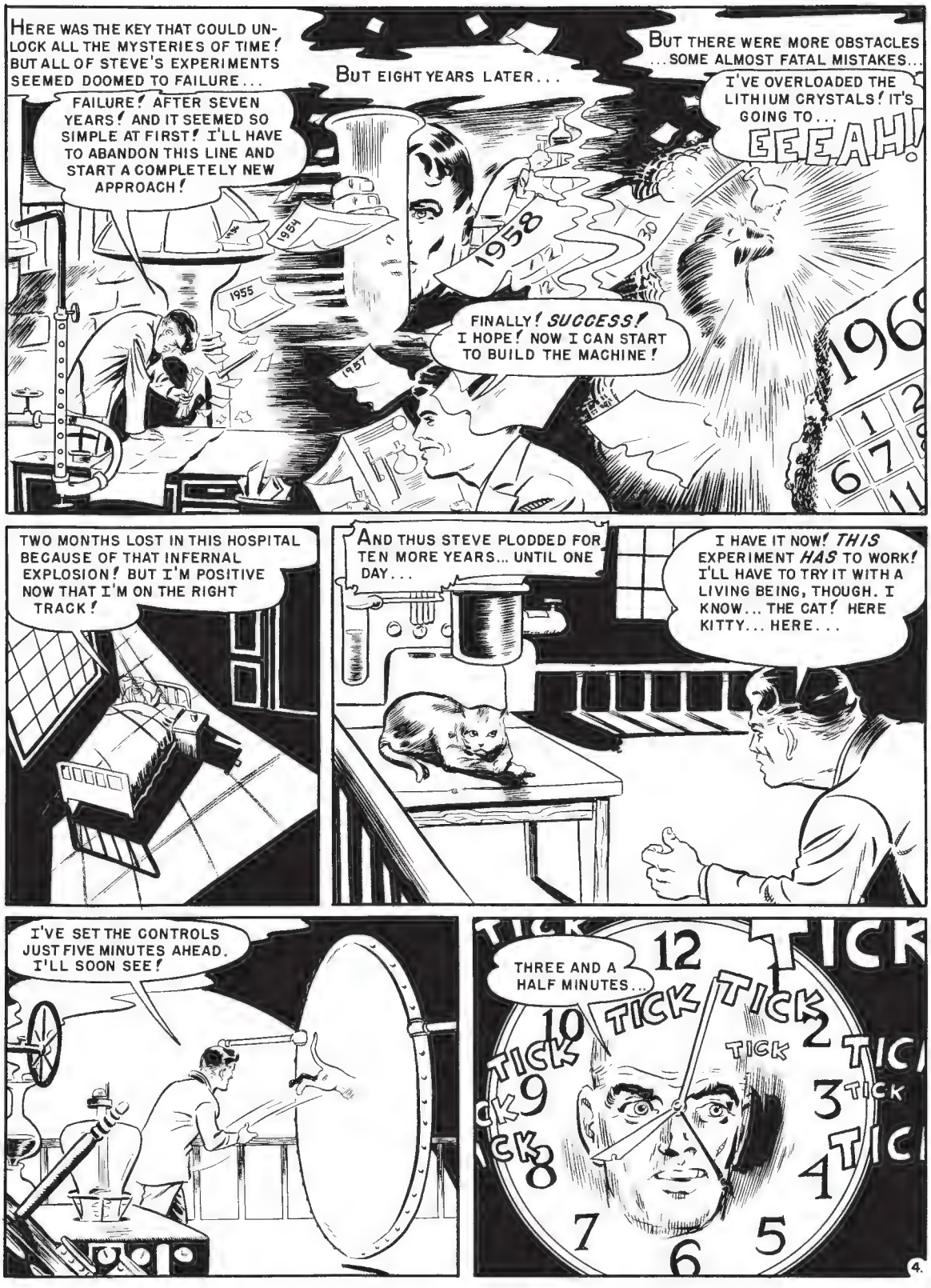
THOSE DREAMS...THEY NEVER ENDED! HAVE THEY ENDED NOW? I CAN'T BE DREAMING...THEY SAY IF YOU PINCH YOURSELF YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT DREAMING IF YOU FEEL THE PAIN! LORD KNOWS I FEEL PAIN NOW... OOOOH THE PAIN...THE PAIN...
EASY FELLER... HERE COMES THE AMBULANCE!
THIS MAN DOESN'T NEED A DOCTOR, HE NEEDS A PRIEST!
ADELE...MOTHER... FATHER...BACK THERE IN THE CAR! DREAMING... WORKING ON DEADLINES...DOZED AT WHEEL...
...THE IRONY OF IT... ALL A DREAM TILL REAL TRAGEDY STRIKES! IF ONLY I COULD WAKE UP NOW AND FIND I'M ONLY DREAMING! I...I DON'T WANT TO DIE...
...AND BY HIS MOST TENDER MERCY MAY THE LORD PARDON THEE WHATEVER SINS THOU HAST COMMITTED...
PLEASE DON'T LET ME DIE...PLEASE....
IT'S ALL RIGHT MR. BRISTOL, IT'S ALL RIGHT! REST MR. BRISTOL...IT'S ALL RIGHT, MR. BRISTOL...
PLEASE.. PLEASE!
ALL RIGHT, MR. BRISTOL! WAKE UP! THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU NOW!
WHUFF! MUST HAVE DOZED OFF! BRR! WHAT A DREAM!
NOW JUST RELAX, MR. BRISTOL. DR. FROYD WILL BE IN TO INTERVIEW YOU IN A MOMENT!
WELL, MR. BRISTOL, IF YOU'RE RELAXED, TELL ME YOUR STORY! YOU DON'T HAVE TO RUSH! JUST TAKE YOUR TIME!
NO...NO. NOT ANOTHER DREAM...
And so we leave Arthur Bristol and his dream dilemma Or is Arthur really dreaming this? Maybe He isn't dreaming it at all! Could be that YOU, dear reader, are the one having the dream.. Could be that all this is going on in your imagination....
could be..
7

FOR STEVE DORNER, THE UNIMAGINABLE DEPTHS OF THIS MYSTERIOUS BLACK HOLE IN SPACE HELD A PROBLEM HE HAD TO SOLVE! BUT HIS STRUGGLES TO FIND THE ANSWER PROVED THAT...

ONLY TIME WILL TELL
AN EERIE-SCIENCE SUSPENSTORY!
DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT YOU CAN AFFECT *TIME* WITH THAT CONTRAPTION, STEVE?
YES, IF MY THEORIES ARE RIGHT! NOW, IF I CAN ONLY WORK THIS MACHINE OUT...
WELL, I HAVEN'T GOT TIME FOR THIS MAD SCIENTIST STUFF! SO LONG!
HMMM? WHA... OH, YES, DAN. SEE YOU TOMORROW!
1

NOW IF I CAN BUILD THE MACHINE TO BOMBARD THESE LITHIUM SALTS WITH ULTRA-HIGH FREQUENCIES, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO... WHAT WAS THAT? THAT NOISE...
WHERE... WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? AND WHAT... WHAT IS THAT?
I CAN'T EXPLAIN NOW, BUT YOU MUST COME WITH ME! PLEASE!
BUT WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DO YOU WANT ME TO GO?
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP ME! THAT MACHINE YOU'RE BUILDING... YOU UNDERSTAND THE THEORY OF TEMPORAL RESONANCE! COME WITH ME!
BUT... BUT I MUST BE DREAMING!
STEVE STEPPED INTO THE BLACK SPACE... INTO AND THROUGH IT... BEYOND... AHEAD... HE KNEW NOT WHERE...
YOU HAVE JUST PASSED THROUGH A TIME WARP INTO THE FUTURE!
THAT MACHINE... THIS HOOP... IT'S TRUE! I MUST BE IN THE FUTURE! THEN... IT IS POSSIBLE!
BECAUSE OF THE WORK YOU'RE DOING, YOU UNDERSTAND THIS FUNCTION OF THE MACHINE! NOW YOU MUST HELP ME!
WELL... OKAY... IF IT'S AN EMERGENCY!
2.

NOW, IF YOU'LL TURN THE FIELD CONTROL BACK TO 30 AMPS, I'LL HOLD THE COILS IN SHAPE WITH THIS DIELECTRIC ROD! THEN I'LL BE ABLE TO ADJUST THE TEMPORO-MAGNETIC FIELD CURRENT!
I UNDERSTAND... IS IT ALL RIGHT NOW?
TWO HOURS LATER...
PHEW! I CAN FINISH IT ALONE NOW. YOU'LL HAVE TO GO! THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME LEFT. HURRY!
BUT I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THIS! OBVIOUSLY THIS MACHINE IS AN EXTENSION OF THE VERY THEORIES I'VE BEEN TESTING! AND IT WORKS!
IF THIS IS THE FUTURE, I WANT TO KNOW HOW FAR AHEAD ARE WE? AND...
THERE'S NO TIME TO TALK! I'M SORRY, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO GO... NOW! I CAN'T SUSTAIN THIS FIELD MUCH LONGER!
NO! THE MACHINE IS SET... GO!
HERE'S SOMETHING! THIS DIAGRAM... IT LOOKS LIKE...
YE-E-E-O-O-WW! I'M BACK! WELL, AT LEAST I GOT THIS...
... DIAGRAM! WHAT THE-? LOOKS LIKE I JUST BARELY GOT THROUGH IN TIME! AND MY SLEEVE...
LOOKS LIKE I WAS ON THE RIGHT TRACK! I'LL HAVE TO TRACE THIS FRAGMENT OF THE BLUEPRINT AND ATTEMPT TO RECONSTRUCT THE PROBABLE UNITS!
3


HERE WAS THE KEY THAT COULD UNLOCK ALL THE MYSTERIES OF TIME! BUT ALL OF STEVE'S EXPERIMENTS SEEMED DOOMED TO FAILURE...
FAILURE! AFTER SEVEN YEARS! AND IT SEEMED SO SIMPLE AT FIRST! I'LL HAVE TO ABANDON THIS LINE AND START A COMPLETELY NEW APPROACH!
BUT EIGHT YEARS LATER...
BUT THERE WERE MORE OBSTACLES ...SOME ALMOST FATAL MISTAKES...
I'VE OVERLOADED THE LITHIUM CRYSTALS! IT'S GOING TO...
EEEAH!
FINALLY! SUCCESS! I HOPE! NOW I CAN START TO BUILD THE MACHINE!
1954
1955
1957
1958
1966
TWO MONTHS LOST IN THIS HOSPITAL BECAUSE OF THAT INFERNAL EXPLOSION! BUT I'M POSITIVE NOW THAT I'M ON THE RIGHT TRACK!
AND THUS STEVE PLODDED FOR TEN MORE YEARS... UNTIL ONE DAY...
I HAVE IT NOW! THIS EXPERIMENT HAS TO WORK! I'LL HAVE TO TRY IT WITH A LIVING BEING, THOUGH. I KNOW... THE CAT! HERE KITTY... HERE...
I'VE SET THE CONTROLS JUST FIVE MINUTES AHEAD. I'LL SOON SEE!
THREE AND A HALF MINUTES...
TICK
4.

FIVE MINUTES! IT WORKED!
MEEOW!
NOW I'LL SET IF FOR... UHHH! IT'S STUCK! I CAN'T MOVE IT! THE LEVER HAS FROZEN AND THE MACHINE IS STILL RUNNING!
GOOD HEAVENS! WHAT CAN I DO? THESE COILS ARE CAUSING THE TROUBLE, BUT I CAN'T FIX THEM SINGLE-HANDEDLY! THE MACHINE IS LIABLE TO... EXPLODE! I MUST DAMPEN THIS MOTION!
THERE! NOW IT'S FIXED IN TIME, BUT... THE TEMPORAL ENERGY IS BUILDING UP IN THE ACCUMULATOR! AT THIS RATE OF CHARGE, IT WILL EXPLODE IN FIVE HOURS!
IT WILL TAKE ME AT LEAST A WHOLE DAY TO MAKE REPAIRS MYSELF! I MUST HAVE HELP! BUT THERE'S NO ONE...
THE MACHINE IS FIXED TWENTY YEARS IN THE PAST! I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS THIS MACHINE! I'LL GO BACK AND GET MY YOUNGER SELF!
1950
WHERE... WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? AND WHAT... WHAT IS THAT!
5.

GOOD LORD... THAT'S ME... TWENTY YEARS AGO! I HARDLY RECOGNIZE MYSELF! HOW I'VE CHANGED!
BUT WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DO YOU WANT ME TO GO?
YOU HAVE JUST PASSED THROUGH A TIME WARP INTO THE FUTURE!
THAT MACHINE... THIS HOOP... IT'S TRUE! I MUST BE IN THE FUTURE! THEN... IT IS POSSIBLE!
TWO HOURS LATER...
PHEW! I CAN FINISH IT ALONE NOW. YOU'LL HAVE TO GO! THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME LEFT. HURRY!
IF THIS IS THE FUTURE, I WANT TO KNOW HOW FAR AHEAD ARE WE? AND...
THERE'S NO TIME TO TALK! I'M SORRY, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO GO... NOW! I CAN'T SUSTAIN THIS FIELD MUCH LONGER!
HE JUST BARELY GOT THROUGH! THE BLUE PRINT... HE'S TAKEN HALF OF THE BLUE PRINT WITH HIM!
BUT I TOOK HALF OF THE BLUE PRINT WITH ME TWENTY YEARS AGO! THAT MEANS THE VISITOR THAT I HAD FROM THE FUTURE WAS... MYSELF! MYSELF, AS THE OLD MAN THAT I AM TODAY!
I WAS BORN... I LIVE... I WILL DIE! MY LIFE RUNS ON A STRAIGHT LINE IN TIME... LIKE THIS STRING! BUT...
6.

BUT THIS CAN'T BE! IT'S ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE! IF I JUST LOOP THE STRING...
THIS IS BUT ONE PIECE OF STRING! BUT...AH! I LOOP IT BACK UPON ITSELF... AS MY LIFE WAS BENT BACK IN TIME! THERE APPEAR TO BE TWO PIECES OF STRING...BUT THERE IS REALLY ONLY ONE! JUST AS THERE IS ONLY ONE ME!
THAT MUST BE THE ANSWER! AND THE PROOF...I MUST FIND THAT OLD HALF OF THE DIAGRAM!
HERE IT IS...AND IT MATCHES PERFECTLY WITH THE HALF THAT WAS JUST LEFT HERE. THAT MEANS THAT THE HALF OF THE BLUE PRINT WHICH MY YOUNGER SELF JUST TORE OFF AND TOOK BACK WITH HIM, AND THIS HALF THAT I HAVE HERE—WHICH I TOOK FROM MYSELF TWENTY YEARS AGO—ARE THE SAME PIECE!
THEREFORE, I ONLY MANAGED TO BUILD THIS MACHINE WITH THE AID OF THE HALF OF THE DIAGRAM THAT I TOOK FROM MYSELF! BUT WHO ORIGINALLY DREW THE HALF THAT I STOLE, COPIED, AND LATER PUT IN THE DRAWER?
IT'S A CIRCLE! A HORRIBLE CIRCLE WITH NO BEGINNING... AND NO END!
Let every man be master of his time... Wm. Shakespeare
7.

THE WORLD BECAME A SCREAMING MADHOUSE WHEN TERROR AND VIOLENT DESTRUCTION PLUNGED DOWN FROM THE SEEMINGLY INNOCENT SKIES! EARTH HAD NEVER FACED A MORE INSIDIOUS ENEMY THAN...
The METEOR MONSTER
CRASH
BILL! WHAT WAS THAT?
LOOKED LIKE A METEOR! IT MUST HAVE FALLEN BEHIND THE HILL! I'M GOING TO TAKE A LOOK!

TAKE CARE, BILL!
OH, DON'T WORRY, EDNA! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
THERE IT IS! GUESS I'D BETTER NOTIFY THE AUTHORITIES!
CRACK!
EARTH HAD NEVER SPAWNED SUCH A CREATURE AS BILL SAW BEFORE HIM! HORRIBLE... BUT IT HELD A STRANGE FASCINATION...
GOOD HEAVENS! IT'S OPENING UP! WHAT ON EARTH IS...
IT'S SUCH A PECULIAR COLOR! I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH QUEER EYES... I'M GETTING DIZZY!
THE MONSTER'S IMMENSELY POWERFUL MIND, PRODUCT OF AN ALIEN WORLD, POURED FORTH ITS ENERGY! VIBRANT RAYS FOUGHT AND GAINED CONTROL OF BILL'S MIND...
MY EYES... I CAN'T SEE! THAT BUZZING NOISE... HELP!
YOU SEE, I'M QUITE FRIENDLY! COME HERE!
IT SEEMS SORT OF NICE! GUESS IT WOULDN'T HURT ME!
2

HE IS NOW UNDER MY CONTROL! HE WILL DO AS I SAY! MAN... TAKE ME TO YOUR HOUSE! YOU LIKE ME!
I MUST TAKE CARE OF IT! I... LIKE...IT!
YEEOW!
I'M YOUR FRIEND! YOU LIKE ME! YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE CARE OF ME!
BILL...HELP ME! I FEEL SO... FUNNY!
OH, I COULDN'T SEE IT VERY WELL BEFORE! IT'S A PRETTY LITTLE THING, ISN'T IT?
YES, I THINK WE OUGHT TO KEEP IT, DON'T YOU, DEAR?
I'M HUNGRY, WOMAN! FIX ME SOME FOOD!
DO YOU THINK IT'S HUNGRY? MAYBE I'D BETTER MAKE SOMETHING FOR IT TO EAT! YOU SEE WHO'S AT THE DOOR!
KNOCK KNOCK
SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, BILL. EVENING, MRS. MANNING.
WE WERE JUST DRIVING TO TOWN AND WE SAW A TERRIFIC FLASH OF LIGHT! THERE WAS A NOISE LIKE AN EXPLOSION...SOUNDED LIKE IT CAME FROM OVER HERE!
GASP..
WHAT'S THAT... THING?
THEY ARE FRIENDS OF YOURS! ASK THEM IN! THEY WILL SOON BE FRIENDS OF MINE, TOO!
WON'T YOU COME IN FOR A MOMENT?
3

MAYBE I'D BETTER COME IN... FEEL A LITTLE DIZZY FOR SOME REASON!
ME TOO! MY EYES...
MORE VICTIMS! THESE MEN TOO WERE TRAPPED BY THE HYPNOTIC SPELL OF THIS... BEAST FROM NOWHERE...
FEEL ALL RIGHT, NOW, I GUESS! DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME! MY, THIS IS A CUTE LITTLE FELLER!
WE'RE GOING TO TAKE CARE OF IT... WE WANT TO HELP IT!
WELL, WE'LL BE GETTING ON! GOING TO THE TOWN MEETING TONIGHT, BILL?
SURE THING! GUESS EVERYONE'LL BE THERE! C'MON, EDNA, PRETTY UP, AND WE'LL GO TO TOWN WITH TED AND JIM, HERE.
MEETING OF THE VILLAGERS? I NEED MORE PEOPLE UNDER MY CONTROL! I WILL GO, TOO!
OH, BILL! I THINK WE OUGHT TO TAKE OUR NEW PET, DON'T YOU? WE CAN PUT IT IN A BOX!
WITH THE INCREDIBLE POWER TO BEND TO ITS WILL ALL WHO EVEN LOOKED AT IT, THE FIENDISH SCHEMES OF THIS UNEARTHLY MONSTER COULD NOT FAIL!
... AND THAT TAKES CARE OF OLD BUSINESS, FOLKS! IF THERE'S ANYTHING NEW, SPEAK UP!
IF I CAN GET THEM ALL TO LOOK AT ME, I WILL HAVE THE ENTIRE TOWN UNDER MY CONTROL! MAN... TAKE ME TO THE FRONT!
4

ONE MOMENT, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO SHOW YOU!
QUIET, FOLKS! BILL MANNING HAS SOMETHING TO SAY!
TAKE ME OUT OF THIS BOX! THEY MUST LOOK AT ME! THAT'S WHERE MY POWER LIES!
I'M...ER...NOT MUCH AT...UH... MAKING SPEECHES, SO I'M JUST GOING TO SHOW YOU...
I'M YOUR FRIEND! YOU LIKE ME! YOU WANT TO HELP ME! YOU'RE ALL GOING TO HELP ME!
ISN'T IT NICE? I KNEW YOU'D LIKE IT! WE MUST BE GOOD TO IT!
YOU WILL BUILD A COMFORTABLE NEST FOR ME! NOW! I WILL STAY HERE IN THIS BUILDING! YOU WILL OBEY ME!
5

AND THUS THE MONSTER DIRECTED THE WILLING SLAVES FROM ITS HIDEOUS LAIR IN THE TOWN HALL...
FROM THE NOISE, SOUNDS LIKE EVERYBODY'S IN THE TOWN HALL, KING! COME, BOY, WE'LL SEE WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING SINCE WE'VE BEEN OUT OF TOWN!
HI, CHARLIE! HOW HAVE...
YA-AH!
QUIET, KING! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?
GRRRRR
COME HERE! YOU ARE NEW! I MUST CONTROL YOU, ALSO!
WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU, KING? DOWN, BOY!
GROWR
I CANNOT CONTROL THIS MAN! HE IS DANGEROUS! BRING HIM TO ME!
COME OVER HERE A MINUTE, CHARLIE!
?
HE LOOKS AT ME, BUT DOES NOT SEE ME! I CANNOT CONTROL HIM BECAUSE...HE'S BLIND! MY MIND ENERGY CANNOT ENTER THROUGH HIS EYES!
WHAT IS IT, HANK? TELL ME, WHAT DOES KING SEE THAT I CAN'T?
GRRRR
I CANNOT GET TO HIM! HE MUST BE DESTROYED! MEN... GET RID OF HIM! KILL HIM!
YOU DON'T LIKE OUR FRIEND! WE CAN TELL! YOU MUST GO!
6

HELP! SAVE ME! I'M BEING ATTACKED, I CANNOT CONTROL THIS... BEAST! HELP!
GRRRR
CHARLIE! STOP YOUR DOG! HE'S ATTACKING OUR FRIEND!
KING! STOP IT!
HE'S NEVER BITTEN A MAN! THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG... EVERYONE'S ACTING SO STRANGELY!
GRR
KING WOULD NEVER ATTACK A FRIEND! BUT HE IS MY EYES, AND I WILL TRUST HIM!
AIEEE
THE BLOW FOUND ITS MARK! AND AT THE VERY MOMENT OF THE MONSTER'S DEATH, THE ALIEN FINGERS OF CONTROL WITHDREW FROM ITS PRISONERS' MINDS...
THAT THING... IT'S... AWFUL!
WE WERE HYPNOTIZED INTO LIKING IT! UGG-G-GGH!
WE'VE GOT TO GET RID OF IT! IT'S STRANGE... AND... HORRIBLE!
I HATED TO TOUCH THAT FOUL NEST!
THANK HEAVEN WE'RE RID OF IT! WHO KNOWS WHAT IT MIGHT HAVE MADE US DO!
BUT SPEWED FORTH FROM THE FOUL CONTENTS OF THE NEST WERE... THE MONSTER'S EGGS!
A LONE VISITOR FROM SPACE... THIS ONE MONSTER COMPLETELY CONTROLLED AN ENTIRE TOWN! WHAT MIGHT A THOUSAND MONSTERS DO?
7

SECRETS STOLEN FROM THE AGES OF DARKNESS... HINTS OF TERROR FROM THE MUSTY PAGES OF THE DEVIL'S OWN BOOK... DREAMS OF POWER NOT MEANT FOR MORTALS ARE CONCEALED IN THIS LOATHSOME VOLUME! CURSED BE THE MAN WHO EXPERIMENTS WITH...

The BLACK ARTS

IN THE SILENCE SURROUNDED BY THE WRITINGS OF AGES PAST SITS LUTHER MARTIN! OUTWARDLY HE IS A QUIET LITTLE MAN, BUT HIS THOUGHTS... HIS SECRET THOUGHTS ARE WILD AND TORMENTED AS HE FURTIVELY GLANCES ABOUT HIM...

WHY DOESN'T SHE LOOK AT ME? IS IT TO BE MY ETERNAL FATE NEVER TO KNOW HER...TO CONFESS MY LOVE FOR HER? CAN SHE NEVER LOVE ME?

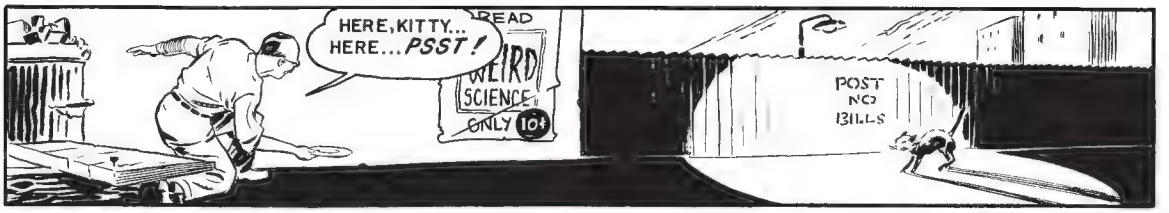
LUTHER KNOWS IT CANNOT BE! DESPONDENT, BUT EVER HOPEFUL, HE WAITS DAY AFTER DAY FOR JUST ONE LOOK, ONE SMILE...

I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE! I MUST SEE WHERE SHE LIVES... WHAT SHE DOES! I'LL ...FOLLOW HER!

WERE I BUT A STRONGER MAN, I'D GO RIGHT UP TO HER AND INVITE HER OUT FOR THE EVENING! IT WOULD BE... WONDERFUL!
WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE HER NOTICE ME? I WOULD LIKE TO SWEEP HER OFF HER FEET, YET ALL I CAN DO IS ... DREAM!
BUT INVISIBLE FORCES OF EVIL PRESS CLOSE AS LUTHER STUMBLES HIS MISERABLE WAY HOME...
SIGH! I'LL ALWAYS BE... ALONE! I HAVEN'T EVEN GOT MEMORIES!
THUS LUTHER DREAMS CONSTANTLY OF THE BEAUTIFUL MARION! STILL HE DARES NOT APPROACH HER...
SHE'S LOOKING AT ME! I'D BETTER FIND SOMETHING TO READ. I WOULDN'T WANT HER TO THINK I'M JUST A LOAFER!
THIS IS THE OLD PART OF THE LIBRARY! I'VE NEVER BEEN HERE BEFORE! I WONDER WHAT I CAN FIND TO READ!
OUCH! TRIPPED... OH-H-H! I BROKE THE PANEL! IF THEY FIND OUT, THEY WON'T LET ME COME BACK TO THE LIBRARY!
WHA-WHAT'S THAT?
2

WHY...THERE'S A BOOK HERE! IT'S SO OLD! MUST HAVE BEEN LYING HERE FOR YEARS!
I CAN JUST MAKE OUT THE TITLE..."THE NECRONOMICON... THE SECRET ART OF BLACK MAGIC!" IT MIGHT BE VALUABLE!
NECRONOMICON
The secret art of Black Magic
NOBODY CAN SEE IT UNDER MY COAT! IF I CAN SELL IT... SHE'D LOOK AT ME THEN! I'D HAVE MONEY.. AND CLOTHES- EVERYTHING!
GOODNIGHT, MISS DENNIS!
GOODNIGHT... ER... SIR!
THIS STUFF IS HORRIBLE... "How to call forth demons... Magic Spells that do kill Beasts!" STRANGE STUFF...WHAT'S THIS? "Love Philters... just a drop of this magic liquid and whosoever drinks it shall eternally love the first person their eye shall meet..."!
BUT...THESE THINGS AREN'T REAL! LOVE POTIONS...CHILDISH STUFF! BUT, STILL... IF THERE REALLY IS SUCH A THING...
AND THE IDEA GROWS UNTIL IT TORMENTS HIS EVERY WAKING MOMENT! THIS IS THE ANSWER ...A LOVE POTION...
I'LL DO IT! THERE'S NOTHING TO BE LOST, AND I MIGHT... I MIGHT GAIN HER... LOVE!
HOW CAN I COLLECT THIS STUFF? FIRST... UGG-GGH! THE CEMETERY... HOW HORRIBLE!
3

IN THE FRENZY OF HIS LOVE-SICK DESPAIR, LUTHER FINDS A COURAGE HE NEVER POSSESSED...
I'VE NEVER EVEN DARED ENTER THIS GRAVEYARD! NOW I MUST... OPEN A GRAVE!
"A lock of hair from the corpse... a handful of moss scraped from the tombstone of a fair maiden dead from the anguishes of a lost love..."
THE PAPERS SAID THIS GIRL COMMITTED SUICIDE BECAUSE SHE COULDN'T MARRY THE MAN SHE LOVED!
"... a sprinkling of dust from the rafters of a house haunted by the dead, shunned by the living..."
IF ANY HOUSE... COUGH... IS HAUNTED, THIS OLD WRECK MUST BE!
"... some possession of the loved one, to be burned, and the ashes..."
I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED SOME SMALL TOKEN AS THIS! OH, IF YOU ONLY KNEW... BUT YOU SOON WILL!
NOW... TO BURN THE HANDKERCHIEF WITH THE RIGHT CHANT! AND THE LOVE-APPLE... THE TOMATO! AND... UGGH... THE HAIR! IF THIS WILL ONLY WORK... BUT IT MUST!
SPECTRES OF WITCHES LONG DEAD... SHADOWS OF SATAN'S ARCH-DEMONS PEER OVER LUTHER'S SHOULDER WHILE THE MYSTERIOUS CONCOCTION BREWS...
THIS IS IT! I MUST TEST IT! I KNOW... THAT ALLEY CAT WHO SNARLS AT ME ON MY WAY HOME! SHE HATES ME! WE'LL SEE IF SHE CAN CHANGE!
4



WITH AN UNHOLY FASCINATION, LUTHER WATCHES THE HISSING CAT CHANGE MIRACULOUSLY...

BUT HOW IS HE TO MAKE MARION DRINK THE POTION? SHE MUST NOT SUSPECT...
SOMEHOW I MUST GET HER TO DRINK A GLASS OF WATER! BUT HOW? I'VE GOT IT! I'LL GET HER LUNCH... IT'S RAINING! THAT'S A GOOD EXCUSE!

YES, SIR?
IT'S RAINING SO HARD... I THOUGHT PERHAPS... I'M GOING TO GET SOME LUNCH... I... ER, WONDERED... COULD I GET SOMETHING FOR YOU, MISS DENNIS?

THERE! AND NOW, SHE'LL BE MINE!
THANK YOU, MR. ... ER... I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T QUITE CATCH...
LUTHER MARTIN!
SHE'LL REMEMBER MY NAME SOON! I HOPE SHE DRINKS IT RIGHT AWAY!
WHY DOESN'T SHE DRINK IT? THE TEA... DRINK IT! AH! SHE'S ADDED SUGAR, NOW SHE SURELY WON'T TASTE ANYTHING!
THERE! SHE DRANK IT... NOW SHE'S GOT TO LOOK AT ME FIRST! I'LL GET HER ATTENTION!
WHY, YES... THANK YOU SO MUCH, MR... ER MARTIN!
OH, MISS DENNIS! IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?
HER EYES CATCH HIS... AND, FOR A MOMENT, LUTHER SEES THE FIRST FLICKER OF LOVE! BUT THEN, INCREDIBLY ... SHE TURNS AWAY...
IT... DIDN'T WORK! THAT TREACHEROUS BOOK! CHILDISH STUFF! BAH!
THE FOLLOWING EVENING...
A POOR SPECIMEN OF MANHOOD ... RELYING ON MAGIC! THAT INFERNAL BOOK! I'LL RETURN IT TO ITS DISMAL SHELTER! THAT WILL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO SEE HER, ANYWAY!
LUTHER'S HOPES, HIS DREAMS OF LOVE ARE SHATTERED! THE FUTILITY OF HIS FOLLY POSSESSES HIM...
READ ALL ABOUT IT! SENSATIONAL! GRAVES ROBBED! WATCHMAN BRUTALLY STRANGLED!
LATEST PAPER MISTER!
WHA... ER... OH, ALL RIGHT!
MURDER
GRAVE ROBBED
6

IT'S HOPELESS, I KNOW! BUT MAYBE...IT TAKES A WHILE TO WORK! PERHAPS TONIGHT... PERHAPS NOW... BUT I'LL HAVE TO HURRY! IT'S ALMOST CLOSING TIME!
SHE'S AS LOVELY AS EVER... AND AS DISTANT! MAYBE... MAYBE THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG! A WRONG SIGN... A CHANT! I'LL CHECK ONCE MORE!
NEWS
GRAVE ROBBED
KILLER
and with this philter of love she shall be yours, for ever... but CAUTION
WHAT'S THIS? HERE'S SOMETHING I DIDN'T NOTICE!"... Take heed! This draught of love may have most horrible effects! Beware lest it be mixed with the leaf of the bush known as Thea Sinensis!"
"... the tea plant!" "TEA!" BUT... THAT'S WHAT I PUT THE POTION INTO!
CLICK
"... then the drinker of this potion shall become a beast of the night who doth rob graves and commit foul deeds with its hideous claws which do sprout after darkness befalls!" ROB GRAVES... A BEAST... OH, NO-O-O-O! THE PAPER... HEADLINES... STOLEN CORPSE! MURDER!
GRAV
ROBBE

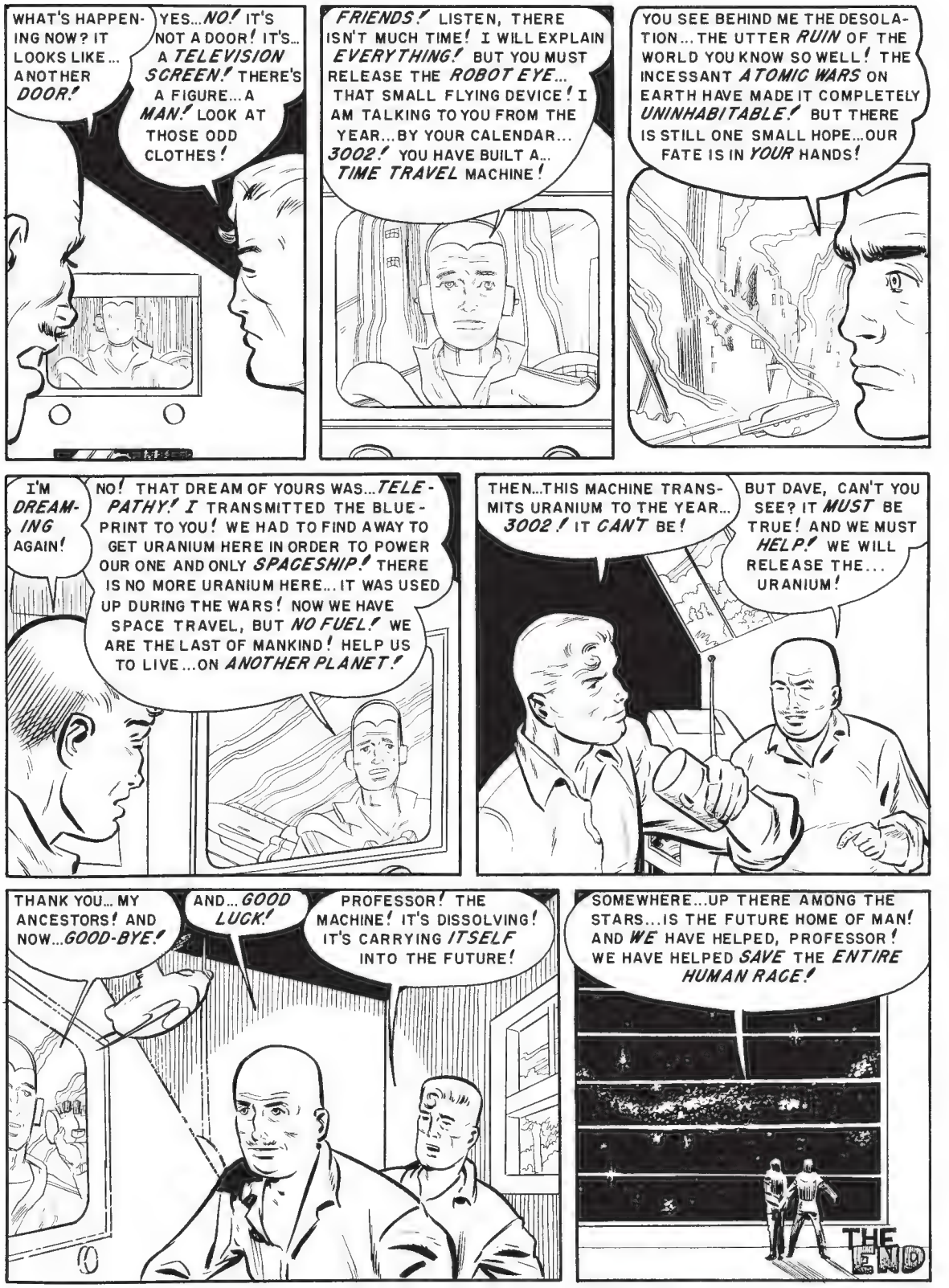
THE WORLD WAS MENACED WHILE THE GREATEST SCIENTIFIC MINDS OF THE CENTURY FRANTICALLY SOUGHT THE ANSWER TO THE MYSTERIOUS...
MACHINE from NOWHERE
BUT WHAT'S HAPPENING, PROFESSOR?
NOW I'VE SEEN IT WORK... AND I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS, OR WHAT IT'S DOING! I DON'T KNOW!
IT WAS A COLD, SNOWY EVENING IN JANUARY WHEN PROFESSOR DONALSON FIRST FACED THIS BEWILDERING PROBLEM...
WHEN I GOT YOUR MESSAGE I WANTED TO COME RIGHT OVER, BUT I HAD A CLASS TONIGHT! I CAME AS SOON AS I COULD!
COME IN, PROFESSOR! I'M GLAD YOU MADE IT... I NEED YOUR HELP BADLY!
YOU SAID YOU HAD SOMETHING STRANGE...SOMETHING WEIRD TO SHOW ME!
IT DOESN'T LOOK WEIRD, PROFESSOR DONALSON! BUT WHAT CAUSED IT HAS GOT ME STUMPED! BUT I SEE I'M JUST CONFUSING YOU! LET ME SHOW YOU!
HARRISON

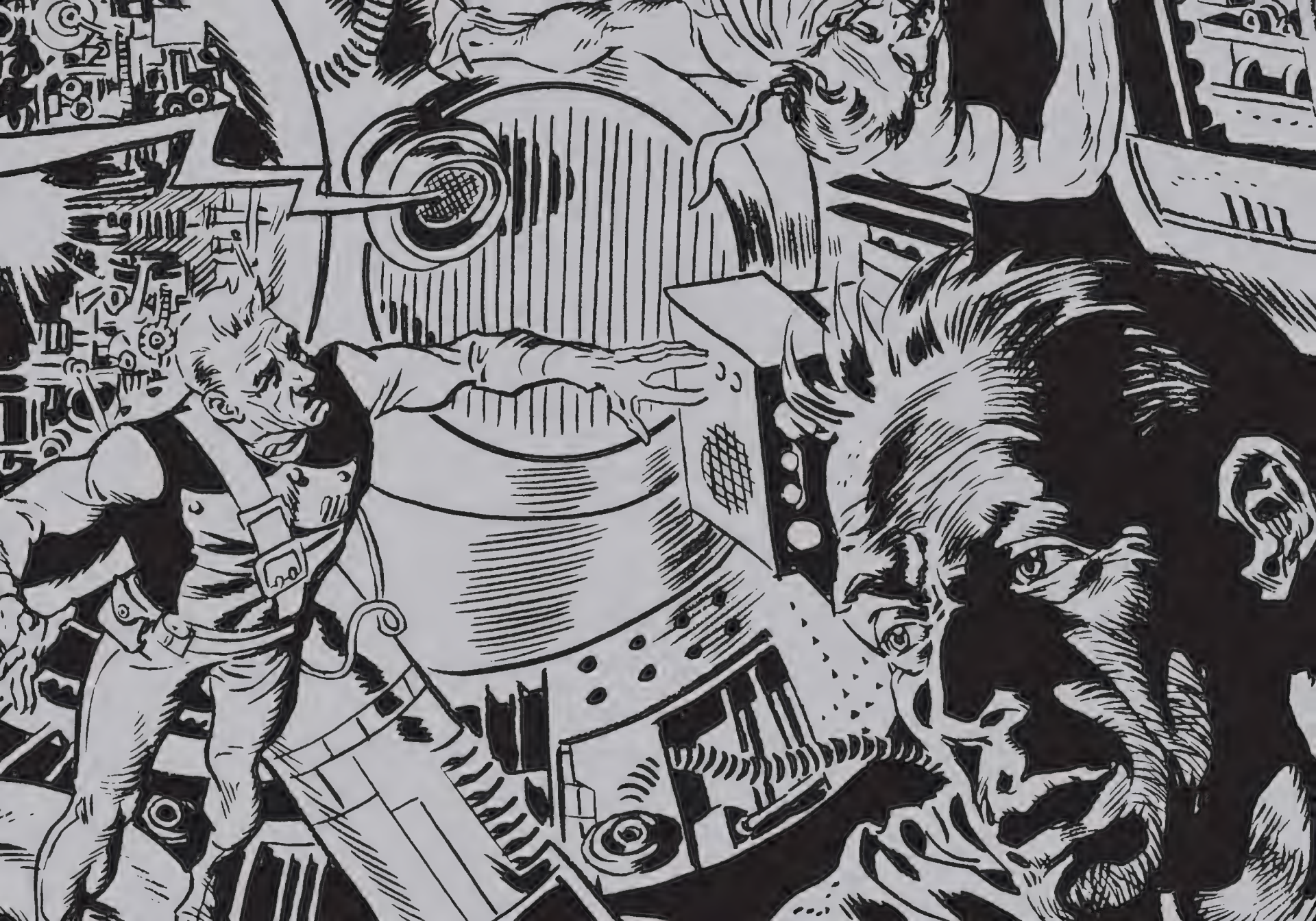
I BUILT THAT THING, BUT ... I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS!
OH, REALLY NOW, DAVE! I KNOW YOU'RE ONE OF THE MOST PROMISING YOUNG SCIENTISTS IN THE COUNTRY! YOU BUILT THIS MACHINE... AND YET YOU SAY YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS! IS THIS APRIL FOOL'S DAY?
PROFESSOR DONALSON, WHEN I TELL YOU MY STORY I THINK YOU'LL BE JUST AS PUZZLED AS I AM!
YOU'RE IMAGINATIVE AND INGENIOUS AS WELL AS A BRILLIANT SCIENTIST, DAVE! I'M PREPARED TO BE ENTERTAINED! COME, TELL ME ALL, SON!
WELL, PREPARE TO BE STARTLED AS WELL AS ENTERTAINED, THEN! BUT I GUARANTEE THAT WHEN I FINISH... YOU WON'T LAUGH!
THIS WHOLE MESS STARTED JUST A FEW DAYS AGO! I WAS WORKING ON THAT MOLECULAR WAVE THEORY LATE INTO THE NIGHT, AND I WAS QUITE TIRED! I JUST COULDN'T GO ON ANY LONGER! I DECIDED TO TAKE A SHORT NAP...
"I WAS VERY RESTLESS! I HAD THE PROBLEM OF THE MOLECULAR VIBRATOR ON MY MIND..."
"... AND I STARTED TO DREAM! IT'S ALL SO CONFUSED NOW, BUT SUDDENLY I HAD A WONDERFUL NEW IDEA! IT SEEMED SO LOGICAL IN THE DREAM THAT I HAD TO MAKE THE BLUEPRINTS IMMEDIATELY!"
"JUST AS I FINISHED THE BLUEPRINT IN THE DREAM, I SUDDENLY WOKE UP! I KNEW I SHOULDN'T LOSE THIS MARVELOUS IDEA, SO I STARTED THEN AND THERE TO BUILD THE MACHINE! IT WAS SUCH A POWERFUL IMPULSE...I COULDN'T STOP MYSELF!"
2

DO YOU MEAN THAT YOU BUILT THAT MACHINE FROM A DREAM? THEN, YOU CERTAINLY MUST HAVE KNOWN WHAT IT WAS!
THAT'S ONE OF THE ODDEST THINGS ABOUT IT! I'M SURE I KNEW IN THE DREAM, BECAUSE IT SEEMED LIKE A REVOLUTIONARY IDEA THAT WOULD...WELL, WOULD DO SOMETHING! BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT!
AND ANOTHER ODD THING IS THAT WHILE I WAS BUILDING IT, I WORKED ENTIRELY FROM MEMORY! I SIMPLY CLOSED MY EYES...AND THERE WAS THE BLUEPRINT!
I RATHER THINK THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT WOULD BE MORE INTERESTED IN THIS PHENOMENON! WHY DON'T WE DISCUSS IT AT THE NEXT FACULTY CLUB MEET...WHAT WAS THAT NOISE?
THAT STRANGE CLICKING SOUND! IT'S COMING FROM THE LABORATORY!
IT MUST BE... THE MACHINE!
STARTLED AT THE WEIRD CLACKING NOISE, THE MEN DASHED TO THE LABORATORY! AT THE DOOR THEY STOPPED COLD AND STARED AT THE STRANGEST SIGHT THEIR SCIENTIFIC EYES HAD EVER ENCOUNTERED...
CLACK
BZZZZ
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
BZZ
BZZZZZZZZ
CLACK
CLACK
CLICK
CLACK
CLICK
WHA... WHAT IS THAT?
I...I... CHOKE... DON'T KNOW!
IT BURNED A HOLE IN THE GLASS...IT'S FLYING AWAY!
NOW WE'VE SEEN IT WORK, DAVE! I'VE WATCHED IT... I'VE HEARD IT... AND I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS!
WHAT HAVE I CREATED? A MACHINE THAT ... BUILDS, OR HATCHES SMALLER MACHINES!
BUT WHERE DID IT GO? AND WILL THERE BE MORE OF...THEM? AND WILL IT RETURN? WE MUST GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS!
3

HERE'S THE TRAP DOOR THE THING FLEW OUT OF!
BUT I DIDN'T BUILD ANYTHING LIKE THAT SMALLER MACHINE! LISTEN! IT'S COMING BACK!
CLACK
IT'S CARRYING SOMETHING! AND THAT NOISE... IT'S STILL CLICKING!
DUCK! HERE IT COMES!
CLICK
CLACK
THAT NOISE... IT'S NOT THE MACHINE! IT'S MY GEIGER COUNTER!
THEN... THAT'S SOMETHING RADIOACTIVE DROPPING INTO THE MACHINE!
CLACK
CLACK
CLICK
CLICK
IT'S URANIUM! NOTHING ELSE COULD HAVE SUCH HIGH RADIOACTIVITY! WHERE DID IT GET THAT METAL? THIS IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN I THOUGHT!
DAVE! THE GEIGER COUNTER! IT'S STOPPED! WHEN THE METAL DISAPPEARED INTO THE MACHINE... IT STOPPED! NOTHING CAN SHIELD RADIATION LIKE THAT! WHERE DID THE URANIUM GO?
CLICK CLACK ICL..
I'M GOING TO FIND OUT WHERE THIS THING GOES! I'M GOING TO FOLLOW IT ON MY MOTORCYCLE!
RIGHT! I'LL FIGURE OUT SOME WAY TO TRAP IT WHEN IT COMES BACK!
DAVE DASHED OUT INTO THE BITING NIGHT WIND! A SMALL PINPOINT OF LIGHT THAT CAME FROM THE MACHINE LED HIM ON A MYSTERIOUS CHASE...
MY 'CYCLE IS REALLY COMING IN HANDY TONIGHT!
WELL! I GUESS I'LL NEVER KNOW WHERE IT'S GOING! I WONDER WHERE I AM! THIS PLACE IS CERTAINLY IN A SECLUDED SPOT! HOLD ON... THERE'S A SIGN!
4

STOKELY
ATOMIC RESEARCH
LABORATORY
NO TRESPASSING
KEEP OUT
SO THAT'S WHERE THE URANIUM COMES FROM! BUT... HOW DID IT KNOW WHERE TO GO? AND... WHAT IS IT?
DID IT COME BACK YET?
NO! I'VE FIXED UP THIS TRAP OVER THE WINDOW! WHEN IT ENTERS, THE WINDOW WILL CLOSE OVER IT! WE'LL CATCH IT AND BE ABLE TO EXAMINE IT!
BUT TELL ME, WHERE DID IT GO? WHERE IS IT GETTING THE URANIUM?
IT WENT INTO THE STOKELY ATOMIC RESEARCH LAB! HOW ON EARTH CAN A MACHINE KNOW JUST WHERE IT WANTS TO GO? THE WHOLE THING'S A MYSTERY!
HERE IT COMES! NOW WE'VE GOT IT! LISTEN TO THAT NOISE!
GOOD WORK, PROFESSOR! NOW WE'LL GET A GOOD LOOK AT IT!
BZ-Z-ZZ-Z
IT ALMOST SEEMS ... ALIVE! LOOK AT THE WAY IT HOLDS ON TO THAT URANIUM!
I KNOW I NEVER BUILT THAT INTO THE MACHINE! PROFESSOR, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? ISN'T THERE SOMEONE... SOMEONE WHO CAN EXPLAIN ALL THIS?
THE MYSTERY IN THE TRAP INTRIGUED THE TWO MEN! BUT BEHIND THEM AN EVEN MORE AMAZING SCENE ENSUED...
PROFESSOR! LOOK! THE MACHINE IS GOING CRAZY!
IT'S LOOKING FOR THIS LITTLE MACHINE! MAYBE THE URANIUM IS FOOD... OR... SOMETHING!
CLICK
CLACK
CLACK
CLICK
5


WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW? IT LOOKS LIKE... ANOTHER DOOR!
YES...NO! IT'S NOT A DOOR! IT'S... A TELEVISION SCREEN! THERE'S A FIGURE... A MAN! LOOK AT THOSE ODD CLOTHES!
FRIENDS! LISTEN, THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME! I WILL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING! BUT YOU MUST RELEASE THE ROBOT EYE... THAT SMALL FLYING DEVICE! I AM TALKING TO YOU FROM THE YEAR... BY YOUR CALENDAR... 3002! YOU HAVE BUILT A... TIME TRAVEL MACHINE!
YOU SEE BEHIND ME THE DESOLATION... THE UTTER RUIN OF THE WORLD YOU KNOW SO WELL! THE INCESSANT ATOMIC WARS ON EARTH HAVE MADE IT COMPLETELY UNINHABITABLE! BUT THERE IS STILL ONE SMALL HOPE... OUR FATE IS IN YOUR HANDS!
I'M DREAMING AGAIN!
NO! THAT DREAM OF YOURS WAS... TELEPATHY! I TRANSMITTED THE BLUEPRINT TO YOU! WE HAD TO FIND AWAY TO GET URANIUM HERE IN ORDER TO POWER OUR ONE AND ONLY SPACESHIP! THERE IS NO MORE URANIUM HERE... IT WAS USED UP DURING THE WARS! NOW WE HAVE SPACE TRAVEL, BUT NO FUEL! WE ARE THE LAST OF MANKIND! HELP US TO LIVE... ON ANOTHER PLANET!
THEN... THIS MACHINE TRANSMITS URANIUM TO THE YEAR... 3002! IT CAN'T BE!
BUT DAVE, CAN'T YOU SEE? IT MUST BE TRUE! AND WE MUST HELP! WE WILL RELEASE THE... URANIUM!
THANK YOU... MY ANCESTORS! AND NOW... GOOD-BYE!
AND... GOOD LUCK!
PROFESSOR! THE MACHINE! IT'S DISSOLVING! IT'S CARRYING ITSELF INTO THE FUTURE!
SOMEWHERE... UP THERE AMONG THE STARS... IS THE FUTURE HOME OF MAN! AND WE HAVE HELPED, PROFESSOR! WE HAVE HELPED SAVE THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE!
THE END



BEST JOB I EVER DID.

S.C. RINGGENBERG

WALLACE WOOD

He had this enormous talent and his curse was that he was introverted ... everything was bottled up ... which eventually did great harm to him ...

— *Harvey Kurtzman*

Wallace Allan Wood's life story is, ultimately, a dark tragedy, underlit by frequent bursts of artistic brilliance. He was a man consumed by his inner furies who, nonetheless, left behind an astonishing artistic heritage.

Wood was born June 17, 1927, in Menahga, Minnesota. Despite a complete lack of encouragement from his parents, he seemed destined from childhood for a career in art, as evidenced by a dream at age 6 in which he found himself the possessor of a magic pencil that could draw anything. The dream had such an impact on him that he recalled it throughout his life.

EC publisher William M. Gaines considered Wood to be "the greatest science fiction artist there ever was." Some comics historians and aficionados consider Wood to be the best comic book inker of all time. He could make even the most mediocre pencil art vibrant with his rich blacks, his use of realistic details, and his knack for populating his universe with voluptuously sexy women. However, what emerges from everything ever written about Wood is that he was a versatile, protean talent who could do literally everything — penciling, inking, lettering, editing, coloring, and writing.

He is also famous among comics professionals for his "22 Panels That Always Work," a series of sketches he created primarily for himself as a quick reference for design ideas when he encountered a dull script. He shared these visual notes with his assistants, who shared them with their colleagues, who continued the chain until the hasty-but-thoughtful sketches became an iconic reference for virtually all U.S. comics artists.

Wood began his career in comics in 1948 as a letterer after a post–World War II hitch with the Army Airborne. He worked as an assistant for other artists, including George Wunder on *Terry and the Pirates* and Will Eisner on *The Spirit*. He formed a studio with Harry Harrison

and Joe Orlando and collaborated with them on such comics as *Fu Manchu* and *Captain Science.*

When Wood started at EC in 1950, he did a little of everything, starting with Western and romance comics, then on to a handful of horror tales. But it was his war, crime, suspense, and science fiction stories and covers — and his superb humor work for *Mad's* comic book and magazine incarnations — that earned him his status as a comics pioneer and legend.

At EC, Wood proved to have a special affinity for science fiction, and he quickly became EC's preeminent science fiction illustrator. As he refined his style, he developed the visual elements that became his signatures: richly detailed spaceship interiors (based, in part, on the aircraft he'd become familiar with while a paratrooper with the 11th Airborne Division); distinctively styled spacesuits with bubble helmets; slimy, tentacled alien monsters (which he later expertly parodied in "Flesh Garden" in *Mad* #11); futuristic technology; cities that rivaled the best of Alex Raymond and Virgil Finlay; exotic alien women; and handsome, stalwart spacemen.

Wood turned out stellar science fiction work before and after EC, notably the "Spirit on the Moon" sequence he ghosted for Will Eisner, his superb inking on Jack Kirby and Dave Wood's *Sky Masters of the Space Force* comic strip, and hundreds of classic pulp illustrations for *Galaxy* and other magazines, but most observers regard his EC science fiction stories as some of the very best ever done in comics.

His EC work is also remarkable for the way he approached stories set in contemporary 1950s America, illustrating what friend and colleague Al Williamson called "civilian jobs." In stories like "Came the Dawn!" or "The Whipping" (*Came The Dawn And Other Stories*, Fantagraphics Books, 2012), his dynamic style made drawings of people in ordinary street clothes just as visually exciting as any of his spacesuit-wearing astronauts in *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy* or the armor-clad knights he drew in *Two-Fisted Tales*, *Frontline Combat*, and *Valor.*

His run on *Mad* is particularly noteworthy. Because Harvey Kurtzman had raided the *Mad* stable of artists in 1956 to start *Trump*, Wood was left as the only remaining original *Mad* contributor. He became new editor Feldstein's go-to guy until Feldstein could rebuild his art staff. Wood went on to appear in all but four issues of the comic and magazine from the first issue (October-November 1952) through issue #90 (October 1964), when he and Feldstein had a falling-out. He returned for one final appearance in *Mad* #143, June 1971.

But Wood's artistry was not limited to comics. In addition to his hundreds of pages of comic book covers and story pages, he created advertising art, book illustrations, lunchbox art, board game covers, animation, gag cartoons for men's magazines, pornographic illustrations, pornographic comic strips, album cover art, posters, art portfolios, syndicated newspaper strips (nine by Wood's own count, either as primary artist, ghost artist, or art assistant), trading cards, stickers, and novelty illustrations — including doing reams of designs for Topps's notorious *Mars Attacks* card set. There was almost nothing Wallace Wood could not draw.

In the 1960s, Wood's art appeared in issues of Warren Publications's *Creepy*, *Eerie*, and *Blazing Combat.* (Fantagraphics Books released a softcover collection of *Blazing Combat* in 2010.) He worked for Marvel Comics, including a stint on early issues of *Daredevil*, during which he re-designed the character's costume. That design has endured and remains today.

In 1965, he created, packaged, edited, and drew much of *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* for the short-lived Tower Comics. Tower offered more pages than the competition, providing a more satisfying reading experience, albeit at a higher price. But Wood populated those pages with fresh stories from himself, Steve Ditko, Gil Kane, and Reed Crandall, among others.

Starting in 1966, Wood began publishing *witzend*, one of the very first alternative comics, in which he serialized his own stories, as well as work by Gray Morrow, Ken Smith, Neal Adams, Crandall, and Ditko. He published four issues, then turned it over to Bill Pearson, who published nine more issues through 1985. In 1969, Wood published another independent comic, *Heroes, Inc. Presents Cannon.* (Fantagraphics Books released both the collected *witzend* and the collected *Cannon* in 2014.) He also published collections of his Sally Forth comic strips, which he'd produced for *Military News* and *Overseas Weekly* from 1968 through 1974.

In the 1970s, he worked sporadically on many comic books for a variety of companies,

including *All Star Comics* for DC Comics, where he designed the costume for the bosomy superhero Power Girl, notable for its distinctive cutout that revealed her cleavage. Throughout the '60s and '70s, Wood pursued a personal project called *The Wizard King*, finally seeing it through to publication in 1978.

Two biographies of Wood (*Against the Grain* by Bhob Stewart, TwoMorrows Publishing, and *Wally's World: The Brilliant Life and Tragic Death of Wally Wood, the World's 2nd Best Comic Book Artist* by Steve Starger and J. David Spurlock, Vanguard Productions) took pains to pay tribute to Wood's artistic genius, but also made no bones about the fact that this talented, troubled man was frequently his own worst enemy.

Through three marriages, two divorces, and heartbreaking professional setbacks (such as the cancellation — despite strong sales — of the line of Tower superhero comics) Wood remained amazingly prolific. But he was also a victim of chronic alcoholism and chain smoking, which may have contributed to the kidney failure, strokes, and resultant loss of vision that slowed him down in his later years.

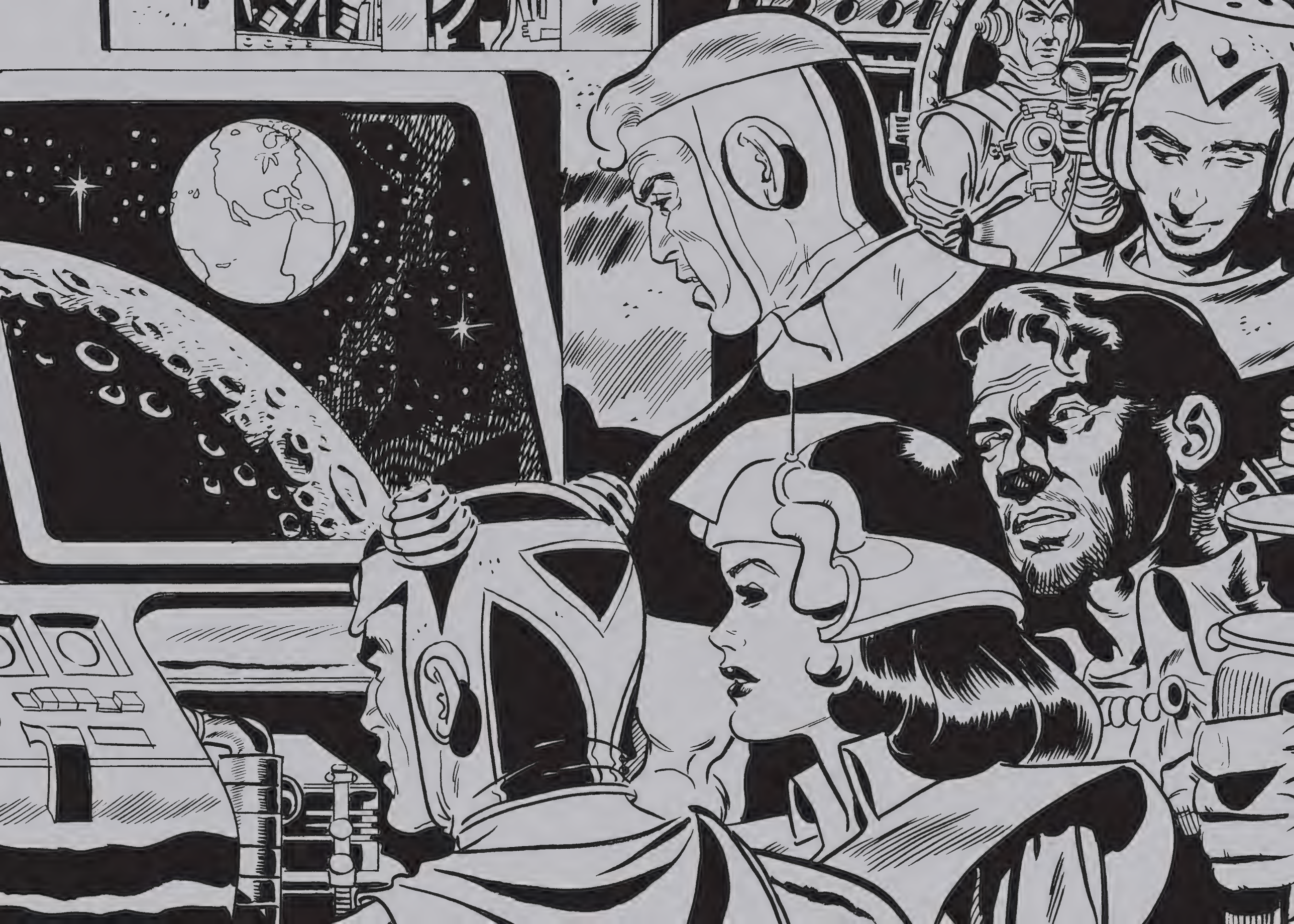
On or about November 2, 1981, apparently despondent over those health issues, Wallace Wood placed a gun to his right temple and pulled the trigger. He was 54. No suicide note was found.

"He was a sweet man ... a pixie," said Gaines, upon learning of Wood's death. "It was a dreadful tragedy. He died too young with too much undrawn."

Wood received the National Cartoonists Society's Best Comic Book award in 1957, 1959, and 1965. He garnered two Alley Awards, a Best Foreign Cartoonist Award (Angoulême International Comics Festival, 1978), and multiple Hugo Award nominations. He was inducted into the Jack Kirby Hall of Fame in 1989, the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame in 1992, and the Inkwell Awards' Joe Sinnott Hall of Fame in 2011.

Even a cursory examination of Wood's oeuvre reveals an artistic giant who left behind a legacy of staggering beauty and inventiveness. Wood enriched his chosen medium in ways that only a handful of others have ever matched. Despite the hardships he endured (many of which were self-inflicted), the totality of Wood's output is a magnificent, heroic monument to his versatility, technical skill, and wide-ranging imagination.

S.C. "STEVE" RINGGENBERG has been an EC Comics fan since his early teens and has had the good fortune to interview many EC contributors, including publisher William Gaines; editors Al Feldstein and Harvey Kurtzman; and artists John Severin, George Evans, Jack Davis, Jack Kamen, Al Williamson, Angelo Torres, and Frank Frazetta. He has written comics scripts for DC, Marvel, Bongo, *Heavy Metal*, Red Circle, and Americomics. He has authored six young adult novels and co-authored *Al Williamson: Hidden Lands*.



ALBERT B. FELDSTEIN (October 25, 1925–April 29, 2014, b. Brooklyn, New York) began working in comics at 15 at the Eisner and Iger Studio. He graduated from the High School of Music and Art, then attended classes at Brooklyn College and the Art Students League before entering the Air Corps during World War II. While in the Special Forces, he designed posters, painted murals, and drew a comic strip called *Baffy* for the base newspaper in Blytheville, Arkansas. After the war, he worked for Iger again before moving on to Fox Feature Syndicate.

Feldstein began his career at EC in 1947. Though initially hired as an artist, he is best known for his writing. He also served as editor for most of EC's comic book titles. With Bill Gaines, he created EC's famous line of horror and science fiction comics, including *Tales From the Crypt* and *Weird Science*. He became editor of *Mad* in 1956, where he remained until 1984.

After moving to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, he fulfilled his life-long dream of becoming a fine artist. He later moved to Livingston, Montana, with his wife, Michelle. In 1999, he received an honorary Doctorate of the Arts degree from Rocky Mountain College in Billings, Montana.

Feldstein was inducted into the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame in 2003. In 2011, he received the Bram Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Horror Writers Association. He died at home, April 29, 2014.

WILLIAM MAXWELL GAINES (1922–1992, b. New York City) was the son of M.C. Gaines, the founder of EC Comics. Bill Gaines was studying chemistry at New York University when his father died in 1947, leaving him to run the family business. EC's comics were selling poorly, so Bill moved to re-invigorate the company by breaking from the educational, humor, kiddy, Western, and romance titles that EC was then known for.

He kept Johnny Craig, Al Feldstein, Graham Ingels, and Wallace Wood, and brought in Reed Crandall, Jack Davis, Will Elder, George Evans, Jack Kamen, Bernard Krigstein, Harvey Kurtzman, Joe Orlando, John Severin, Marie Severin, and Al Williamson, among others.

Under Bill Gaines, EC became known for its popular horror, crime, war, and science fiction comics, such as *Tales From the Crypt*, *Crime SuspenStories*, *Two-Fisted Tales*, and *Weird Science* — and, of course, *Mad*, which created its own category.

In 1954, Gaines badly mishandled his appearance before a Senate subcommittee investigating the alleged link between juvenile delinquency and comic books. Shortly thereafter, EC fell victim to the Comics Code Authority, an organization hastily put together by a group of comic book publishers to head off Congressional pressure.

By 1956, EC had dropped all of its titles except *Mad*. Gaines remained publisher of *Mad* until his death in 1992. He was inducted into the Will Eisner Hall of Fame in 1993 and the Jack Kirby Hall of Fame in 1997.

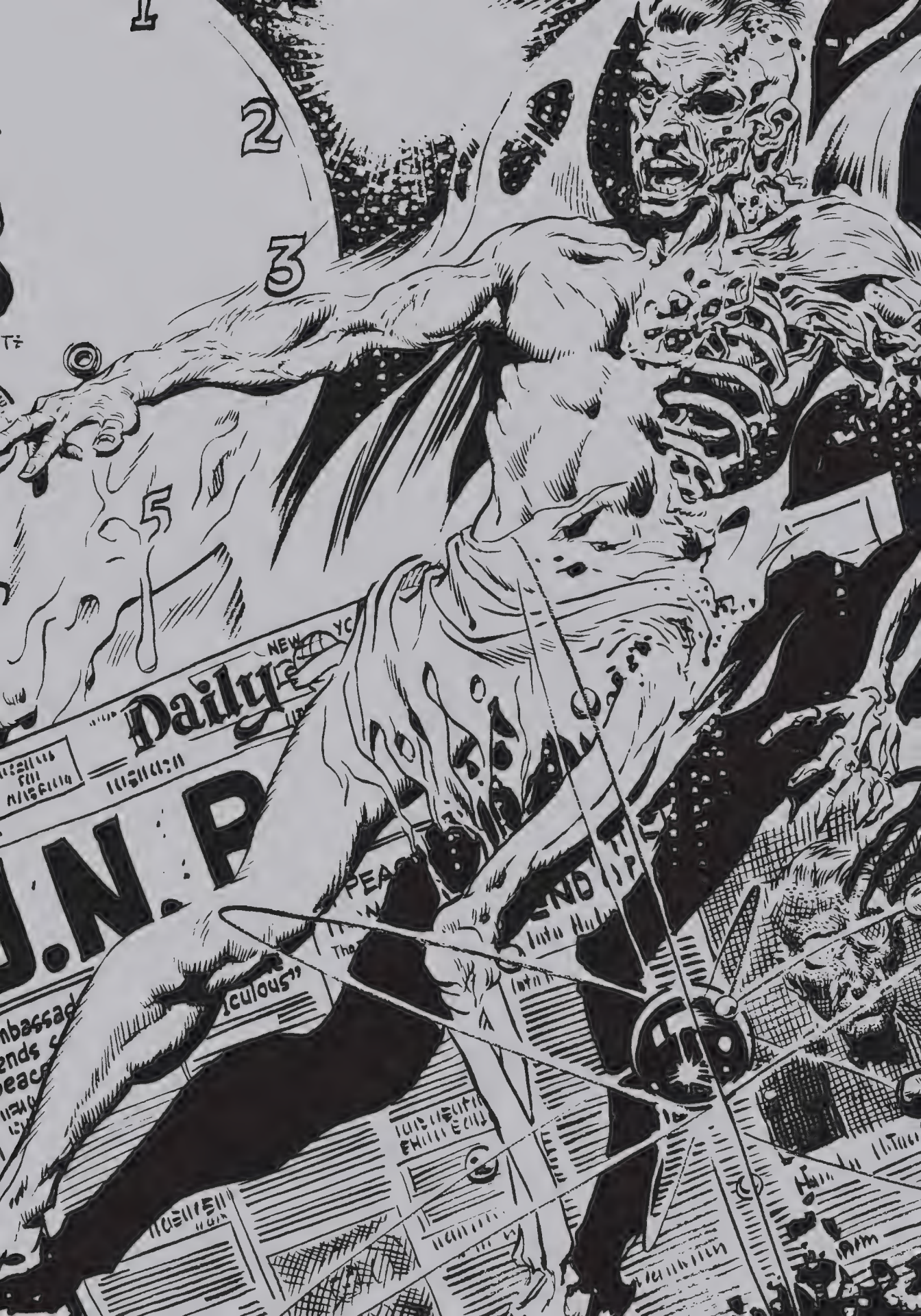
HARRY HARRISON (1925–2012, b. Henry Maxwell Dempsey, Stamford, Connecticut) met Wally Wood in 1948 at the Cartoonists and Illustrators School, and the two became partners. They found work at Fox and Avon before making their way to EC in 1949. Together, they convinced Bill Gaines to publish science fiction comics, and were among the first contributors to *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy*.

Harrison wrote the *Flash Gordon* comic strip in the 1950s and 1960s. He is best known for his science fiction stories, including the *Stainless Steel Rat* series, *Bill, the Galactic Hero* (1965), and *Make Room! Make Room!* (1966) (the basis for the film *Soylent Green*).

In 1973, the Science Fiction Writers of America presented Harrison and Stanley R. Greenberg, *Soylent Green*'s screenwriter, with the Nebula Award for Best Dramatic Presentation. In 1980, Harrison was awarded Sweden's Prix Jules Verne for *Make Room! Make Room!*

In 2004, he was inducted him into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame. That same year, he received an Inkpot Award at Comic-Con International: San Diego. In 2009, he was awarded the Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award by the renamed Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America. Harrison died at his apartment in Brighton, England, August 15, 2012.

JANICE LEE *contributed to these profiles.*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WOOD

TED WHITE

CRIME, HORROR, TERROR, GORE, DEPRAVITY, DISRESPECT FOR ESTABLISHED AUTHORITY —AND SCIENCE FICTION, TOO!

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF EC COMICS

M.C. Gaines was both a practical man, credited with inventing the comic book as we know it (although comic strips had been reprinted in book form for more than a decade prior to his 1933 *Funnies on Parade*), and a visionary.

In the late 1930s he formed a partnership with the owners of Detective Comics, Inc. (subsequently best known as DC Comics) and began publishing a series of superhero titles: *All-American Comics* (which featured the Green Lantern), *Flash Comics* (the Flash), *Sensation Comics* (Wonder Woman), *All-Star Comics* (The Justice Society of America), and *Comic Cavalcade* (a fatter 15¢ anthology of his superheroes).

But these were conventional commercial comic books of their day and, in essence, copies of DC's *Action Comics* (Superman), *Detective Comics* (Batman), and *World's Finest* (15¢ anthology), identical in formatting. Although successful, none (perhaps excepting Wonder Woman's titles) matched the success of DC's Superman and Batman titles. All were published under the DC imprint, and the children who read them probably saw little difference among them.

These comics were forthrightly aimed at kids — theoretically an 8-year-old. Although comics were hugely popular and widely read by World War II and Korean War GIs, the fiction was maintained throughout the '50s that the average comic book reader was still only 8 years old.

From their inception, comic books were looked down upon by much of American society. They cost only 10¢ and were often thrown away after reading. Many teachers regarded comic book reading as a detriment to genuine literacy. The theory was that kids who read comic books would never go on to read "real" literature — they would demand pictures with their prose.

Gaines thought that the comic book medium could be much more than just throwaway

entertainment and he set out to prove it, first with *Picture Stories From the Bible*. It was earnestly done and intended to be educational rather than entertaining. Despite the best intentions of Gaines and his editors, writers, and artist (Don Cameron), it was pretty dull going for a comic book. But Gaines believed in it and pushed it.

Other matters were transpiring behind the scenes, and Gaines parted ways with DC in 1945, selling them all his titles except *Picture Stories From the Bible*.

Gaines began a new publishing imprint for his *Picture Stories* comics — Educational Comics, or "EC." In addition to *Picture Stories From the Bible*, he published *Picture Stories From American History*, *Picture Stories From Science*, and *Pictures Stories From World History*.

These were clearly intended to be sold in or through schools, and to be used with appropriate curricula. They were an idealistic venture, akin to *Classics Illustrated*, designed to prove that the lowly comic book could attain loftier goals of enlightenment.

But, like *Classics Illustrated*, they made no dent on academia. To teachers and other figures of authority over children, they were still "just comic books," and dismissed out of hand. And to the kids — their putative audience — they were dull stuff, lacking the excitement and panache of any superhero comic. They were not a commercial success.

When Gaines had left DC to found EC, he took one DC employee with him to be his business manager — Sol Cohen, whose first job as a teenager had been for DC, checking Manhattan comic book racks for sales movement during Superman's launch in 1938. Cohen had worked his way up through sales and distribution (DC and Independent News, an increasingly important distributor, had interlinking ownership), and he had a promising career at DC. But when Gaines asked Cohen to join him in his fledgling new company, Cohen accepted.

This proved to be a significant move for a reason no one anticipated. Because in 1947 M.C. Gaines and a friend, Sam Irwin, lost their lives in a boating accident on Lake Placid in New York. Gaines's final act was to save the life of his friend's 8-year-old son by throwing the boy to safety.

Gaines's son, William M. Gaines, inherited the company. But Bill was distant from his father, didn't care for comics, and was attending New York University with plans to become a chemistry teacher. Although entreated by his mother to take over the reins at EC, Bill was reluctant and for the first year did little but show up at the office periodically to sign checks.

Into this vacuum stepped Sol Cohen, EC's business manager. As he told me, years later, "the company was going down the toilet. The *Picture Stories* comics weren't selling and neither were the kiddy comics. I had to do something just to save my job."

His first act was to change "Educational Comics" to "Entertaining Comics."

"'Educational' was a word no comic-buying kid wanted to see. It was a kiss of death on any comic book," he told me.

His second act was to dump the *Picture Stories* titles and change the kiddy titles to crime, romance, and Western titles. (Due to postal regulations concerning second class mailing privileges — crucial for distribution purposes — it was financially wiser to change titles, continuing the previous numbering, than to drop one title and start a new one.)

1947 was a decisive turning point, although most of Cohen's changes occurred in 1948. In the late summer of 1947, *Moon Girl and the Prince* was launched. Moon Girl appears to have been a Wonder Woman copy. It went through two title changes before becoming *A Moon, A Girl ... Romance*.

By then Bill Gaines was the editor. In early 1948, EC launched *War Against Crime!*

By 1949 Bill Gaines had become interested in comics. Sol Cohen moved on (to Avon Books) and Bill fully took over the company. He began bringing in the artists and editor/writers who would become known for their subsequent EC work.

Al Feldstein was brought in as a romance artist, although his first work for EC was for the Western title *Saddle Justice* in 1948.

Johnny Craig may have preceded Feldstein with work in the first *Gunfighter*, which also used Graham Ingels.

Harry Harrison and Wallace Wood (as collaborators) made their first appearance at EC in two Western titles that appeared at the end of 1949,

Gunfighter and *Saddle Romances* (where Harrison, solo, had appeared in a previous issue).

The evolution of EC from 1947 to 1950 is one full of hints of the forthcoming "New Trend" titles. But fans of the latter titles may not find a lot to like in the earlier comics from EC. The quality was spotty, and there was not yet any focus on a unique style or approach to comics.

1950 was the year it all came together for EC. That spring saw the transformation of *War Against Crime!* into *The Vault of Horror*, *Crime Patrol* into *The Crypt of Terror* (later to become *Tales From the Crypt*), and *Gunfighter* into *The Haunt of Fear*, thus successfully establishing EC's horror title trio.

The same month *Haunt of Fear* made its debut so did two science fiction titles, *Weird Science* (with #12, previously *Saddle Romances*), and *Weird Fantasy* (with #13, previously *A Moon, A Girl ... Romance*).

In the fall of 1950, *Two-Fisted Tales* made its debut, taking over the numbering of *Haunt of Fear*, so its first issue was designated #18. This was done to satisfy — or dodge — those postal regulations. *Haunt of Fear* itself continued, renumbered, with #4. It confused the fans but made the business office happy. *Crime SuspenStories* premiered about the same time (starting with #1), thus setting in place EC's basic New Trend stable of titles.

Two-Fisted Tales was Harvey Kurtzman's first title, and it brought a sense of realism, irony, and anti-romance to war stories. *Frontline Combat* would join it half a year later.

Crime SuspenStories was Johnny Craig's title (as was, to a lesser degree, *Vault of Horror*; Al Feldstein was the overall SF and horror editor).

By 1951 the classic EC lineup was almost in place, lacking only *Shock SuspenStories* (1952) and *Mad* (1952).

The first half of the '50s was EC's glory time — for better and for worse. For us comics fans, it was the best of times — crowned by superlative art and provocative stories — while for those who watched sternly over us, tut-tutting, it was the worst of times, a triumph of gore and disgust.

EC's basic "crime" was that its comics were not edited for that 8-year-old kid. They aimed higher, at a somewhat older, more mature audience. (13-year-olds, perhaps — I was 13 when I discovered ECs, and I had by then mostly given up on other comics.)

The naysayers won, in the short-term. There were state and federal inquiries (inquisitions?), local comic book bonfires, and ultimately *Seduction of the Innocent* and the Comics Code. The "New Trend" comics were shelved in favor of a "New Direction" and new titles — horror and crime conspicuous by their absence.

But the tide had turned against EC. Its competitors wanted it put out of business (and many claim the Comics Code Authority was formed for that purpose).

In 1956 Bill Gaines gave up a losing fight and folded all his titles except *Mad* — which outlived him and survives wrapped in its decades-old formula to this day.

However, in the long term, EC has survived. There have been countless reprints of the comics themselves, as both comic books and as hardcover books. There have been TV shows and movies based on *Tales From the Crypt*. And now there are these new collections from Fantagraphics, showcasing for the first time the individual artists whose works personified EC.

Theirs was a magical time — a time when young, ambitious artists decided for themselves to take comic book art to heights never previously dreamed of, heights that equaled the best work of the greatest of the newspaper strip artists of the 20th century.

Some of them went on to major successes in commercial art — book covers, movie posters, *TV Guide* covers — while others lived and eventually died in poverty.

No one told them then that what they were doing was a waste of time and ambition. We are all better off for their accomplishments, and we celebrate their work here.

TED WHITE *has been a comics fan for most of his life and, with Larry Stark, Bhob Stewart, and Fred von Bernewitz, was a seminal EC fan in the early '50s. He has been a (still-quoted) jazz critic, a science fiction writer and editor, and a radio deejay. He wrote the Captain America novel* The Great Gold Steal *in 1966 and edited* Heavy Metal *in 1980.*

"What Star Wars *was to science fiction, Wally Wood was to science fiction comics."*
— Joe Orlando

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